The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity

The Cross was present at the Eucharist in early Christianity as an idea, a gesture, and an object. Over time, these different actualizations of the quintessential symbol of Christianity have generated important questions about their meaning and function, among them: Is the Eucharist a meal and/or a sacrifice? Can the sign of the cross illuminate the absence of a Roman epiclesis? Is it pertinent – historically and theologically – to use an altar Cross? In this study, Daniel Cardó explores the relation between the Cross and the Eucharist. Offering a thorough and fresh reading of patristic and Roman liturgical texts, he identifies their emphases and common themes on the Cross and the Eucharist, and demonstrates their significance for the liturgical debates of recent decades.

Daniel Cardó is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Patristics, Sacraments, and Homiletics at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary and Visiting Professor of Theology at the Augustine Institute in Denver, Colorado. He is the author of *Faith in the Thought of Joseph Ratzinger*.

The Cross and the Eucharist in Early Christianity

A Theological and Liturgical Investigation

DANIEL CARDÓ
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary

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To my parents, with love and gratitude

Before your eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

(Galatians 3:1)

Recognize in the bread what hung on the cross, and in the cup what flowed from his side.

(St. Augustine of Hippo)

Whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished.

(Gelasian sacramentary)

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Preface

The same month I embarked on this research project I was entrusted with the care of my parish. While not being part of my plans originally, and proving at times challenging, I am grateful for the specific circumstances in which this book matured. For its main questions, ideas, and contributions did not develop only in libraries, but also in the simplicity of daily pastoral life, in the midst of countless conversations, projects, and decisions about the sacred liturgy. I am convinced that these pages would read very differently had I not been writing and shepherding at the same time. Much of what might be good in them comes from so many encounters with good people who hunger for the Bread of Life and silently carry the crosses of daily life.

I am also keenly aware that this book would not exist had I not benefitted from the generosity and guidance of several scholars, especially Rev. Uwe Michael Lang and Rev. Peter Stravinskas. I want to recognize as well all the other friends and colleagues who have shared with me their knowledge and insights, showing me the beauty of partaking in a common interest; particularly Petroc Willey, Sister Esther Mary Nickel, Rev. Richard Conrad, OP, Juliette Day, Martin Stone, Laurence Paul Hemming, Rev. Neil O'Donahue, Msgr. Stefan Heid, Andrew Cain, Mary Mills, Felicity Harley-McGowan, and Harry Schnitker.

I am also indebted to everyone at Maryvale Institute and at the Cardinal Stafford Library in Denver for their professional diligence. Very special thanks are given to those who in some capacity have reviewed my manuscript, to Kathleen Blum and especially to Geraldine Kelley, and to the editorial team at Cambridge University Press; it is comforting to find

a place where kindness and professionalism go together so well. There are many others who have helped me in numerous ways throughout these years of work and whose names are not mentioned here – please know of my deepest appreciation for you and your generosity.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my parents, who taught me to love God through their devotion to the Eucharist and adherence to the Cross; to my siblings; to my parishioners and staff at Holy Name Parish in Denver for their constant support; and to my community brothers, who reverently helped me find moments of quiet study in the midst of our many apostolic labors and were always open to listen with interest to my ideas and findings.

The sacred liturgy is, indeed, the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church. If this conviction initially moved me to investigate the connection between the Cross and the Eucharist, I can honestly say that after these years I am more certain than ever that there is, truly, nothing more important than the liturgy, and nothing more beautiful and central than the Eucharist. For there we encounter Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And that is the better part, the one necessary thing.

Abbreviations

ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, Ill.)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout, 1953–)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866–)
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin)
MPG	J. P. Migne, ed., Patrologia Graeca (Paris, 1857–1866)
MPL	J. P. Migne, ed., Patrologia Latina (Paris, 1841–1855)
PLS	A. Hamman, ed., Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum (Paris, 1958–)
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford)
SChr	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, 1942–)

Introduction

There is nothing more important than the liturgy. Indeed, "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows."[1] There are many activities, services and works, needs and urgencies, preferences and options, but, at the core of the Church is the sacred liturgy, the source and summit of all ecclesial activity. Truly, "no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree."[2]

An awareness of the excellence and centrality of the liturgy should be sufficient reason to strive for an ever-deeper understanding of its meaning and practice. But when disagreements and even confusion are so frequently present in the liturgical life of the Church, both in the academic world and in the daily practice of parishes and churches, the importance of the study of the liturgy is even more keenly perceived.

The liturgical reform of the past decades has not been unanimously received.[3] The widely divergent accounts of the preparatory works for the Second Vatican Council, its debates and documents, and the subsequent reforms make it difficult to grasp the real picture of what has happened at the dusk of the twentieth and the dawn of the twenty-first

[1] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], 10 in *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1999), 52.

[2] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

[3] While the context of this book is directly related to reforms and discussions within the Catholic Church, the results of the research and its applications have relevant consequences for questions on Christian worship in general. O'Donoghue wrote of the effects of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council for non-Catholic worship as a type of liturgical cross-fertilization. See Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, *Liturgical Orientation: The Position of the President at the Eucharist* (Norfolk: Alcuin Club, 2017), 4.

centuries.[4] Joseph Ratzinger summarized the problems of the post-conciliar reform in a simple way: "The lack of clarity that has prevailed in this area, even during the Council, regarding the relation between the dogmatic and liturgical levels must be regarded as the central problem of the liturgical reform."[5]

The place of the Cross in the celebration of the Eucharist, both from a dogmatic theological perspective and from a liturgical perspective, is a good example of this lack of clarity. The almost universal change of orientation of the Eucharistic celebration following the Council brought with itself some confusion in regard to the centrality that the Cross occupied for long centuries. Was it possible to reconcile the central presence of the Cross – particularly of the altar Cross – with the celebration *versus populum* [towards the people]?

This question became the seed for this book. It very quickly seemed evident that it was not enough to gather data from theological writings or liturgical customs about this specific matter; rather, it appeared necessary to engage in a study in which the theological and the liturgical levels could enrich each other and offer a balanced picture of the topic. To this end, research in textual primary sources appeared as the privileged route, whereby the facts of the theological and practical development of the

[4] See, among others, Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs, 1927–1977* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 122–124, 146–149; *Theology of the Liturgy: The Sacramental Foundation of Christian Existence*, ed. Michael J. Miller, vol. XI of *Joseph Ratzinger, Collected Works* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 539–588; Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990); Piero Marini, *A Challenging Reform: Realizing the Vision of the Liturgical Renewal, 1963–1975* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007); Nicola Giampietro, *The Development of the Liturgical Reform: As Seen by Cardinal Ferdinando Antonelli from 1948 to 1970* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Roman Catholic Books, 2010); Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of Its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996); Alcuin Reid, ed., *A Bitter Trial: Evelyn Waugh and John Cardinal Heenan on the Liturgical Changes* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011); Jonathan Robinson, *The Mass and Modernity: Walking to Heaven Backward* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005); Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background* (Fort Collins, Colo.: Roman Catholic Books, 1993); Pierre-Marie Gy, OP, *The Reception of Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Life of the Church* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003); Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2012); Andrea Grillo, *Beyond Pius V: Conflicting Interpretations of the Liturgical Reform* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013).

[5] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:301.

liturgy could offer greater and more objective evidence than what are all too often the passionate opinions of so many voices.

This book undertakes an analysis of textual primary sources in order to offer insights in the field of sacramental theology.[6] My purpose is to read the primary sources and try to get the "fresh" intuitions of those early texts, gaining an insight into the contemporary situation. In this sense, my objective is to offer a work focused on theology "preached at church," rather than "studied at school";[7] to present an investigation centered on *theologia prima* [primary theology], and so to grasp, among the multitude of texts, the faith, understanding, and practice of the theology and liturgy of early Christianity.[8] The core of this work lies, therefore, in the *attention to what the primary sources say*. And, whereas other studies researching similar topics will focus on a single author or text, my goal could only be achieved by studying an extensive body of writings: patristic texts and Roman liturgical documents from the fourth to the eighth century.

Reading the primary sources convinced me that the richness of the theme would require a broad approach. Thus, the topic being explored is not primarily the altar Cross, but the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist, mainly as an idea, as a gesture, and finally as an object. Understanding the relation between the Cross and the Eucharist sheds light on practical and contemporary problems, for I argue, the Cross is a fundamental hermeneutical key for the understanding of the Eucharist.

THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSION

Because of the lack of clarity about our topic and some confusion about the changes that occurred in the liturgical life of the Catholic Church in the past decades, it is essential to approach this investigation in the context of recent discussion and practice.

[6] See Chauvet's explanation of the object of sacramental theology: "Its object is the church's celebration itself. It has nothing relevant to say that does not stem from the way the church confers the sacraments." Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 48.

[7] See Cesare Giraudo, *"In Unum Corpus": Trattato mistagogico sull'eucharistia* (Milan: Edizioni San Paolo, 2000), 16–19.

[8] About the distinction between *theologia prima* and *theologia secunda*, see David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What Is Liturgical Theology?* 2nd edn. (Chicago and Mundelein, Ill.: Hillebrand Books, 2004), esp. 39–68; see also Robert F. Taft, "Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001" *Worship* 77 (2003): 495.

For some, the reforms implemented after the Second Vatican Council brought about much more than a renewal in continuity, that is, the necessary developments that "adapt to the needs of our times"[9] elements that are subject to change, being careful at the same time to "retain sound tradition."[10] Certain authors or groups of people have a negative view of the post-conciliar reforms, seeing in them a betrayal of tradition. The group most representative of this tendency is the Society of Saint Pius X, founded by Marcel Lefebvre.[11] Others, for example the liturgists John F. Baldovin and Piero Marini, though from a very different perspective and having a positive approach to the changes, would ultimately agree with the first group in the certainty that "the reformed liturgy does represent a radical shift in Catholic theology and piety."[12]

Still other authors, while being critical of some of the ways in which the liturgical reform was implemented, have recognized the need for and importance of liturgical renewal. Joseph Ratzinger is one of those prominent voices that will be an important interlocutor for this study. His contributions on liturgy contain relevant reflections that are concerned not so much about the more technical aspects of liturgical studies, but about "anchoring the liturgy in the foundational act of our faith and, thus, also about its place in the whole of our human existence."[13]

A frequent motif in Ratzinger's liturgical writings is his concern about "a new view" of liturgical celebrations in which "the basic concepts . . . are creativity, freedom, celebration and community."[14] For him, this outlook is based on what he terms an "anthropocentric error": a liturgy "constructed entirely for men," . . . "concerned with winning people over or keeping them happy and satisfying their demands."[15] The liturgy would not be first and foremost the action of glorifying God and sanctifying his people, but a human activity, centered in the community, which finds its own ways of celebrating its faith.

[9] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 62. [10] Ibid., 23.

[11] See their publication *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform: A Theological and Liturgical Study* (Kansas City, Mo.: Angelus Press, 2001).

[12] John F. Baldovin, SJ, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008), 139. See also Piero Marini's assertion that "unlike the reform after Trent, it [the reform after Vatican II] was all the greater because it also dealt with doctrine." Marini, *A Challenging Reform*, 46.

[13] Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Inaugural Volume of My Collected Works," in *Collected Works*, XI:XVI.

[14] Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Structure of the Liturgical Celebration," in *Collected Works*, XI:319.

[15] Joseph Ratzinger, "Eucharist and Mission," in *Collected Works*, XI:332.

Related to this is the understanding of the Eucharist mainly as a communal meal, which soon became widespread among the faithful. Much has been written in the academic world about the "meal character" of the Eucharist.[16] In the context of the twentieth century Liturgical Movement, influential scholars such as Pascher, Guardini, and Schmaus,[17] pointed to the preeminence of the meal as the structural and visible element of the Eucharist. More recently, Edward J. Kilmartin continued this distinction, elaborating on the inner relation of the personal sacrifice of Christ and the outward form of the meal as its sign, as a key to a fair understanding of the Eucharist.[18] From an exegetical and historical perspective, the Protestant scholar Hans Lietzmann saw in the Last Supper a farewell meal and claimed that the Eucharistic sacrifice would have been a subsequent construction of the early community.[19]

Suffice it to say that Ratzinger has been very critical of unilateral presentations of the Eucharist as a meal: "The Eucharist cannot adequately be described by the term 'meal'";[20] "to speak of the Eucharist as the community meal is to cheapen it, for its price was the death of Christ."[21] He expresses apprehension for liturgical congregations that, seeing the Eucharist primarily as a meal, become "a closed circle that is no longer aware of the explosive Trinitarian dynamism that gives the Eucharist its greatness."[22] For this situation, Ratzinger proposes "as

[16] This is a topic that will be studied more extensively in the third chapter of this work. What follows is only a brief summary that intends to situate the context of this study.

[17] See an excellent summary of these positions and of the development of the topic in Manfred Hauke, "The 'Basic Structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic Celebration According to Joseph Ratzinger," in *Benedict XVI and the Roman Missal: Proceedings of the Fourth Fota International Liturgical Conference, 2011*, eds. Janet E. Rutherford and James O'Brien (Dublin and New York: Four Court Press and Scepter Publishers, 2013), 70–82.

[18] See Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 199.

[19] See Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and the Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 172–187. Lietzmann would follow Jülicher and other Protestant authors in the idea that the Supper does not contain a reference to the redemptive value of the Eucharist but only a reference to the imminent event of Jesus' death. See about this Ángel García Ibáñez, *La Eucaristía, don y misterio: Tratado histórico-teológico sobre el misterio eucarístico* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2009), 62.

[20] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Spirit of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:78.

[21] Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Structure of the Liturgical Celebration," in *Collected Works*, XI:322.

[22] Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Question of the Orientation of the Celebration," in *Collected Works*, XI:390.

a priority to reestablish the meaning of the image of the cross,"[23] as a reminder that the apparent contradiction between "meal" and "sacrifice" is resolved when we remember that the paschal mystery is re-enacted at the Eucharist:

> Thus *eucharistia* is the gift of *communio* in which the Lord becomes our food; it also signifies the self-offering of Jesus Christ, perfecting his trinitarian Yes to the Father by his consent to the Cross and reconciling us all to the Father in this "sacrifice." There is no opposition between "meal" and "sacrifice"; they belong inseparably together in the new sacrifice of the Lord.[24]

The Cross, then, appears as a powerful and central element of the celebration of the Eucharist. When Joseph Ratzinger was elected as Successor of Peter, he placed the sacred liturgy as one of the core priorities of his pontificate.[25] One of the distinctive elements of Papal celebrations became the presence of a crucifix at the center of the altar,[26] in clear correspondence with his earlier writings on the topic. Joseph Ratzinger-Pope Benedict XVI said that placing a Cross at the center of the altar was his "recommendation," and expressed satisfaction with the fact that this custom has been adopted more and more widely in the world.[27] Is this a practice arising from a personal view, or is it an example to be followed wherever the Roman liturgy is celebrated? It is worth noting that Pope Francis has continued with this tradition in his own liturgies.

Some authors have criticized this practice, such as the Catalonian liturgist Pedro Farnés[28] and the American Jesuit John Baldovin.[29] The main objections can be found summarized in Farnés' critical review of Ratzinger's *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Farnés disagrees with Ratzinger about the importance of placing a Cross on the altar from a sacramental-theological perspective: the people are called to contemplate Christ represented in the bread and wine and, most especially, in his minister – the

[23] Ibid., XI:391.

[24] Joseph Ratzinger, "Form and Content of the Eucharistic Celebration," in *Collected Works*, XI:311.

[25] See about this Anselm J. Gribbin, *Pope Benedict and the Liturgy: Understanding Recent Liturgical Developments* (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing, 2011), VI–VII.

[26] See Guido Marini, *Liturgical Reflections of a Papal Master of Ceremonies* (Pine Beach, NJ: Newman House Press, 2011), 67–69.

[27] Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Inaugural Volume of My Collected Works," in *Collected Works*, XI:XVII.

[28] Pedro Farnés, "Una obra importante sobre liturgia que debe leerse en su verdadero contexto," in *Phase* XLII, 247 (2002): 55–76.

[29] See Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 80–82; 110–112.

priest – who is the sacrament of God's presence.[30] Another critique of the practice of placing a Cross on the altar focuses on the late date in which this practice is said to have been introduced: around the twelfth century.[31] We will come back to this problem in the third chapter, after reviewing the evidence of the primary sources.

METHODOLOGY

It is important to describe now the methodological approach of this study. For although "the Cross and the Eucharist" is a topic of great importance and antiquity, it has not always been transmitted simply and directly. A text written by St. Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century can help us to illustrate this point. Basil tells us of some practices that Christians have received not in writing but from apostolic tradition:

> Concerning the teachings of the Church, whether publicly proclaimed or reserved to members of the household of faith, we have received some from written sources, while others have been given to us secretly, through apostolic tradition. . . . For instance (to take the first and most common example), where is the written teaching that we should sign with the sign of the Cross those who, trusting in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be enrolled as catechumens? Which book teaches us to pray facing the East? Have any saints left for us in writing the words to be used in the invocation over the Eucharistic bread and the cup of blessing? As everyone knows, we are not content in the liturgy simply to recite the words recorded by St. Paul and the Gospels, but we add other words both before and after, words of great importance for this mystery. We have received these words from unwritten teaching. We bless the baptismal water and the oil for chrismation as well as the candidate approaching the font. By what written authority do we do this, if not from secret and mystical tradition? . . . Are not all these things found in unpublished and unwritten teachings, which our fathers guarded in silence, safe from meddling and petty curiosity? They had learned their lesson well; reverence for the mysteries is best encouraged by silence.[32]

Basil, writing about the aspects of tradition received through "unwritten teaching" mentions the gesture of making the sign of the Cross over the catechumens as the "first and most common example" of those important practices – including the anaphora – that are not transmitted by a written

[30] Farnés, "Una obra importante sobre liturgia," 70–72. Similar ideas are found in John F. Baldovin, SJ, "Idols and Icons: Reflections on the Current State of Liturgical Reform," *Worship* 84 (2010): 396–397.

[31] Farnés, "Una obra importante sobre liturgia," 73.

[32] Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* 27, 66 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 98–99.

document. The Cross – in all its layers – is an ancient aspect of the spiritual patrimony of the Church, intimately connected with its prayer and sacramental life. Although not everything is written about the mysteries, and so not everything is written about the intimate connection between the Cross and the Eucharist, nonetheless there is valuable and remarkable textual evidence through which it is possible to grasp the constant presence of the Cross in the Eucharistic celebrations, as idea, gesture, and object. At this point I should make two methodological delimitations.

CHRONOLOGICAL DELIMITATION

The first key delimitation is the time period: it opens with the fourth century and runs through the eighth century, a time period of significant development in continuity with the first centuries[33] with respect to the presence of the Cross in the Eucharistic theology and practice of the Church. The fourth century is regarded as the "golden age of patristics," when great authors will decisively shape future ways of expressing the Christian faith and its worship.[34] During these years, considered the era of the great liturgies,[35] the ancient world witnessed a decisive growth of devotion to the Cross and the birth of its feasts.

The fourth century also saw the development of the liturgical year, which in turn led to the composition of prayers for the different celebrations, and the beginning of a shift from improvised liturgical prayers to the primacy of the written text.[36] This opened a process of liturgical production that leads us to the end of the patristic era,[37] a time in which we find,

[33] On the importance of avoiding the "ideological separation of early Christianity and the classical patristic era," see Stefan Heid, "The Early Christian Altar – Lessons for Today," in *Sacred Liturgy: The Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*, ed. Alcuin Reid (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 111.

[34] Louis Bouyer writes about this: "It was at this time that the eucharist found its classic expression ... the following centuries produced little else but more or less successful variations on the themes which at that time were beginning to be defined and take shape." Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 138.

[35] See A. Hamman and M. Maritano, "Eucharist," in eds. Angelo Di Berardino et al., *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2014), I:856.

[36] Marcel Metzger describes the fourth and fifth centuries as a time of abundant documentation found in homilies, catecheses, letters, stories, etc., which allow for a systematic and integral study of the rituals in use. See Marcel Metzger, *History of the Liturgy: The Major Stages* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 67.

[37] I follow the traditional dating of the patristic period, ending with John Damascene in the East (+ca. 750) and Bede in the West (+735). See about this Andrew Louth, *St. John*

in Rome, the three early sacramentaries with the Roman Canon, and a substantial body of *Ordines Romani* [Roman Orders], which mark a mature concretization of liturgical prayer and practice.[38]

During these centuries we can also find a remarkable parallel between dogmatic and liturgical progress. The seven ecumenical councils, in which the Church produced fundamental documents on the understanding of divine revelation and the subsequent development of dogma, occurred during this same period. Thus, our study could be broadly framed between the first (AD 325) and second (AD 787) councils of Nicea.[39] As the Church slowly matured in her understanding of what had been revealed from the beginning and reached a more developed expression of dogma towards the end of the patristic era, so also liturgical theology and practice bore ripe fruits around this time, the patient product of centuries of growth. It was a period that produced and expressed "the substance of the liturgical texts and institutions" that became the foundation of any later development, as asserted by Jungmann:

> The substance of the liturgical texts and institutions, which grew out of the life of the primitive Church, was laid down in fixed forms in the West as in the East towards the end of Christian antiquity. To be sure, the Roman liturgy did once again experience a period of growth as it was adopted in the Frankish kingdom from the eighth century on, but this was only a second layer, which was placed on the old foundation.[40]

Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 283.

[38] See also in Martimort's famous collection how the author organizes the chapters in his study on the Eucharist. The second chapter is about the Eucharist from the fourth until the eighth century, as the time of the creation of formularies and the organization of rites. See Robert Cabié, "The Eucharist," in *The Church at Prayer*, ed. A. G. Martimort (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1986), II, 41–107.

[39] This period is roughly parallel to what Brown calls "Late Antiquity." See Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989).

[40] Josef A. Jungmann, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Hebert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder, 1989), 1:1. Metzger similarly affirms: "As far as rituals are concerned, by the eighth century, the essentials had been established, and the innovations of the following centuries could affect only secondary or peripheral aspects." Metzger, *History of the Liturgy*, 112. From a different perspective, Ramsay MacMullen studies these four centuries as a key time for the transformation from paganism to Christianity. See Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity & Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

LITERARY DELIMITATION

The second key delimitation pertains to the kinds of sources and their treatment. During the foundational period between the fourth and eighth centuries two kinds of primary sources appear as particularly relevant: patristic and liturgical texts. In the first chapter I present a survey and thematic organization of Eastern and Western patristic texts. The second chapter is divided into three sections, which examine the primary liturgical sources of the Roman Church: the three early Roman sacramentaries, the Roman Canon, and the Roman Orders. In this way, after reviewing the rich patrimony of the patristic tradition and studying the pillars of the subsequent liturgical documents, we narrow our research to the specific ideas and practices of the Roman liturgy. The logic of this approach is found in the connection and progressive transition from the theological writings of patristic authors to "official" liturgical prayers (sacramentaries) and practices (*ordines*). The methodological decision to go to Roman documents responds to the unique importance and influence of what was produced in Rome for the Western world.

The living environment of the liturgy serves as the common ground in which texts, written in different contexts, locations, and centuries can offer a voice that helps to track the different ways in which the Cross was present in the celebration of the Mass. The "conversation" between these kinds of texts offers a robust approach that brings together two kinds of voices that were part of the one Tradition of the early Church.

The *attention to what the sources say* has been an essential disposition that guided the search for relevant material. Therefore, and always within the chronological and textual framework already indicated, the writings that are part of this book were selected because of what they say and not primarily because of who wrote them or when they were written. Thus, it became possible to highlight the common theological emphases and liturgical practices in a more "fresh" and "pristine" way, going beyond the clear and acknowledged differences of historical and theological background.[41] Consequently, while respecting and taking into account the nature of each text, and recognizing its author, school, and geographic and cultural origin, I tried to bring into one conversation voices that, being sometimes different, fundamentally share some core ideas and customs.

[41] This statement does not intend to ignore the evident importance of a serious knowledge of the authors and their contexts, as a source for depth and an objective understanding of the texts. This is an effort that has also been present throughout the review of the sources.

This identification of certain key themes and practices allows a closer view of the "big picture" of the topic and its development.

As with any methodological choice, there are evident risks and limitations to my reading of sources. First, it is impossible to be completely free of one's own ideas or preferences. Second, the choices of texts and authors can never be perfectly exhaustive. Finally, there are some related topics and areas that had to be excluded in the effort to narrow down the scope of the research. Three examples will suffice to illustrate this point. First, although there are interesting and relevant texts composed prior to the fourth century, it seemed appropriate to exclude them in order to limit the findings to a period that is significantly more documented and consequently less subject to speculation. Second, there are several other writings on the Cross of great beauty and theological depth, but because our topic is specifically the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist, those texts were not included in this book. Third, there are relevant texts in liturgical sources other than Roman, but the vastness and complexity of the other traditions and the importance of providing a more precise and profound account of the liturgical concretization of the theological tradition suggested limiting the study to the Roman rite.

In order to highlight the key ideas and practices that repeatedly appear throughout this book, the materials have been organized thematically. The vast number of texts, while presenting a formidable challenge, allows us to see the topic of "the Cross and the Eucharist" over a decisive range of time, documents, and authors. The arrangement of texts according to certain relevant themes, which were identified after the reading of the texts, allows a thorough review of the material, a logical exposition of its connections, a simple way of showing the common emphases, and a dynamic and engaging presentation of the argument.

CONTRIBUTION

In short, the aim of this book is *to investigate, through the reading of patristic and Roman liturgical primary sources, the ways in which, in theology and liturgical practice, the Cross was present in the celebration of the Eucharist during the foundational and influential period between the fourth and eighth centuries*. I argue that, as it will be consistently seen in the first two chapters of this book, the centrality of the Cross in the theological understanding of the Eucharist and in the liturgical practice of early Christianity, indicate that the Eucharist can only be understood through the Cross; and when this evidence is applied to contemporary

disputes, as I will do in the third chapter, the Cross offers a necessary key for the clarification of certain vital questions.

By connecting theological reflection with liturgical practice, we will be able to comment on the several views held by present-day scholars with regard both to the use of the Cross in liturgy and to the sacramental theology which underpins worship. The three main modalities in which the sources show the Cross to be present in the Eucharist – the idea of the Cross as essential to the understanding of the Eucharist, the gesture of making the sign of the Cross during liturgical celebrations, and the physical presence of the Cross on the Eucharistic altar – align with three presently contested questions, to which I hope to have made a meaningful contribution: first, the necessary unity of the Last Supper and the Cross in the context of the discussion of the Eucharist as meal; second, the importance of the sign of the Cross and the problem of the Roman epiclesis; and, finally, closing the circle, the initial question about the historical and theological pertinence of the altar Cross.

I

The Cross and the Eucharist in Patristic Sources

From the earliest days of the Christian faith, believers have recognized a connection between the Cross and the Eucharist. The understanding of the relationship between the two has developed over the centuries, always showing, albeit in different ways, the importance of that reality. The teachings of several patristic authors indicate that the Cross enjoyed a prominent place in their understanding of the Eucharist, as an idea expressed in rich theological themes, as the gesture of signing with the Cross, and as an object, particularly a Cross on the Eucharistic altar.

Paying attention to what the sources say, in this chapter I will examine a wide selection of texts, particularly those composed between the fourth and eighth centuries by both Eastern and Western authors. The materials have been organized according to five themes, each showing an aspect of the relationship between the Cross and the Eucharist. This method, although not exhausting all the material, will nevertheless offer a meaningful way to review a large body of writings, and to demonstrate, through cumulative evidence, the richness and importance of the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist. It will also offer a rich selection of texts that will be helpful for further research, as well as for prayer and preaching.

Any effort to study a liturgical topic in patristic literature – such as the relation between Cross and Eucharist – requires attention to the hermeneutical place of the sacred liturgy. In a significant number of sources that we will review, liturgy is the context of the writing, whether we read a homily or a commentary on the liturgy or a commentary on some

Scriptural passage, which frequently took the form of a sermon.[1] This fact, on the one hand, presents us with a challenge, as explicit references to the liturgy are not as common as one might expect: there was no need to make explicit what was evident to the hearers of those "texts."[2] On the other hand, the awareness of the frequent liturgical context of patristic writings affords the opportunity to review the relevance of the liturgy and its influence in these foundational texts.[3] For we must remember that most authors of this period were in fact pastors, whose main concern was not purely academic but the care of their flock, whom they were trying to teach to know, love, and worship God.[4]

Several different kinds of texts will be examined in this survey, mainly writings on the liturgical celebrations (e.g. explanations of the mysteries), dogmatic and biblical commentaries, and letters. Within each of the themes, I will follow a chronological order as I address first the Western-Latin, then the Eastern sources, mostly Greek and a few Syrian. Some texts will be presented with only brief comments, as they serve to build up my argument. Other texts that offer more significant support for the development of my thesis will be more fully explicated. In all cases, the texts are quoted and commented on insofar as the common thread of the work is present in them: the ways in which the Cross is seen as related to the Eucharist.[5] My goal is not to write the history of an idea, but to show how certain themes were indeed relevant for numerous authors throughout these foundational centuries. In order to perceive the patterns, continuity, and development of liturgical thought and practice it is necessary to

[1] On the relevance of orality for the understanding of early patristic literature see Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–14.

[2] Similarly, J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz mentions the "severe disadvantage" of the literary sources for the social historian, as these texts were not composed for providing information and many elements of the environment are taken for granted. See J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xiii. On the scarcity of liturgical references in the works of St. Augustine, see James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine Confessions: Volume 1: Introduction and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxix.

[3] On the relevance of ancient homilies as liturgical documents, see Wendy Mayer, "Homiletics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. David G. Hunter and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 568.

[4] See on this Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 26–27.

[5] For other uses of the word "cross" [*stauros*] in the New Testament, see G. Q. Reijners, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature as Based upon Old Testament Typology* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V., 1965), 11–17.

review texts from different times and places. Therefore, beyond the differences and particular emphases of each source, we will be able to appreciate the dynamic unity of tradition, which in the beautiful image used by Benedict XVI, is like a river: a living reality, always coming from the source, and always in development.[6]

The first themes of this chapter express the richness and centrality of the idea of the Cross in the Eucharistic understanding of patristic authors, and the last theme shows the presence of the Cross as a gesture and object. By the end of this chapter, it will be evident that certain emphases mark the views of patristic authors with regard to the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist, and these accents will become important keys for shedding light upon contemporary discussions, as will be seen in Chapter III.

1 THE CONTINUITY FROM THE CROSS TO THE EUCHARIST

We begin our survey with a theme that takes us to the paschal mystery as the source of the Eucharistic mystery. The Eucharist continues the sacrifice of Christ, initiated in the Last Supper and culminating in the Cross and Resurrection.

Western Authors

The celebration of the Eucharist brings to us today what Jesus offered on the Cross, as we will see in the teachings of authors such as Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and others.

Let us begin by reviewing a fascinating text by St. Ambrose (333/4–397), Bishop of Milan. In *De Sacramentis*,[7] Ambrose invites his readers to receive the blood of Christ fruitfully as he reflects on the death of the Lord: "So, as often as you receive, what does the Apostle say to you? As often as we receive, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If death, we proclaim the remission of sins. If, as often as blood is shed, it is shed for the

[6] See Benedict XVI, *Address to Participants in the Congress Promoted by the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm on the 50th Anniversary of Foundation*, Friday May 6, 2011. Found in https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110506_sant-anselmo.html.

[7] While some authors raised questions about the authenticity of this work, today scholars are overwhelmingly in favor of Ambrose's authorship. See Craig Alan Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 20–29; Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 276, especially footnote 31 for a synthesis of the objections of Klaus Gamber and the responses of Bernard Botte.

remission of sins, I ought always to accept Him, that He may always dismiss my sins. I, who always sin, should always have a remedy."[8] The Eucharist, as the proclamation of the Lord's death, becomes the proclamation of the remission of sins, a mystery of hope and mercy for the sinner. It is a reality that continues and perpetuates the shedding of the blood of Jesus on the Cross, blood that, just as once was shed for the remission of sins, is now poured out for the remission of sins as often as the sacrifice is offered.

Let us pay close attention here to Ambrose's careful use of words: "as often as blood is shed, it is shed for the remission of sins." In the Latin text we find two different verbs (*effunditur* and *funditur*), both translated as "shed." Although the verbs are similar and can be used for the actions of shedding blood or of pouring out liquids,[9] Ambrose's choice of verbs might be intentional, for two reasons. First, the Latin word used for the consecration of the wine in the Institution Narrative is *effunditur*. Klaus Gamber, who quotes Ambrose's text in his defense of the translation of *pro multis* as "for many" in the text of the Institution Narrative said during the celebration of the Mass, argues – following Pascher – that the original Greek word *ekchunnomenon* – translated as *effunditur* – is a reference to the act of pouring out (as from a vessel), more than to the shedding of blood from a wound.[10] Could the Bishop of Milan be indicating that, as often as the blood of Christ is "poured out" in the Eucharist, the "shedding" of his blood on the Cross is renewed? A second reason appears to justify this reading. A review of the writings of Ambrose shows that, although in many cases he uses *fundo* and *effundo* in a similar and even interchangeable way,[11] whenever he talks about

[8] Ambrose, "The Sacraments," 4, 6, in *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 306. CSEL 73.

[9] See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 592 and 746.

[10] See Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background* (Ft. Collins, Colo.: Roman Catholic Books, 1993), 191.

[11] Ambrose's use of *fundo* used for shedding blood: Hymnus 14: 5: 17; *Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam*, lib.: 10; *Epistulae*, lib.: 9, epist.: 69, par.: 10. For ointment: *De Iacob et uita beata*, lib.: 2, cap.: 5, par.: 20. For tears: *Explanatio psalmorum xii*, psalmus: 38, cap.: 36, par.: 5; *De Helia et ieiunio*, cap.: 12, par.: 43. For virtue: *Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam*, lib.: 2, linea: 188. For light: *De officiis*, liber: 1, cap.: 14, par.: 56. For water: *De Spiritu Sancto*, lib.: 1, cap.: 16, par.: 164. For poison: *Exameron*, dies: 5, cap.: 7, par.: 19.

Effundo used for shedding blood: *De Noe*, cap.: 26, par.: 98; *Epistulae*: lib.: 1, epist.: 2, par.: 5; lib.: 1, epist.: 3, par.: 5; lib.: 2, epist.: 7, par.: 43. For light: *Exameron*, dies: 4, cap.:

the Eucharistic offering he uses *effundo*.[12] Therefore, this text appears as a remarkable witness to the reality of the continuity of Cross and Eucharist: as often as the blood is "poured out" at the altar, the "shedding" of Christ's blood on the Cross continues to work the remission of sins for those who accept the celebration of this life-giving sacrifice.

St. Jerome (ca. 347–419), in his commentary on Galatians, writes about the originality of the Christian liturgy, noting that we do not celebrate the same Jewish feasts: "We do not celebrate Passover but the cross and resurrection."[13] The Cross and the Resurrection are celebrated: the very same saving events that continue through the liturgy. Similarly, St. Augustine (354–430) talks about this continuity between Cross and Eucharist: it is the same Jesus that hung on the Cross whom we receive in the sacrament. Preaching to the newly baptized about the mysteries that are being unveiled to them, he says that the priestly ministry of Christ, entrusted to the Church for the exercise of "the order of sacrifice," makes present under the form of bread the same body that hung on the Cross, and in the cup the same blood that flowed from Jesus' side:

> So Christ our Lord, who offered by suffering for us what by being born he had received from us, has become our high priest forever, and has given us the order of sacrifice which you can see, of his body that is to say, and his blood. When his body, remember, was pierced by the lance, it poured forth the water and the blood by which he cancelled our sins. Be mindful of this grace as you work out your salvation, since it is God who is at work in you, and approach with fear and trembling [see Phil 2:12–13] to partake of this altar. Recognize in the bread what hung on the cross, and in the cup what flowed from his side.[14]

Certainly, recognizing this mystery implies a faith that is not necessarily easy. The same Bishop of Hippo ponders the difficulties that surround

2. For ointment: *Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam*, lib.: 6, linea: 142; *De uirginitate*, cap.: 11, par.: 66; *De obitu Ualentiniani*, cap.: 5, pag.: 331. For God's charity: *De Spiritu Sancto*, lib.: 1, cap.: 8. For the mysteries of the Father: *De officiis*, liber: 3, cap.: 22.

[12] Ambrose's use of *effundo* for Eucharistic texts: *Explanatio psalmorum xii*, psalmus: 37, cap.: 17, par. 4, lineae 10 and 13; *Explanatio psalmorum xii*, psalmus: 37, cap.: 20, par.: 2; *Expositio psalmi cxviii*, littera: 3, cap.: 8; *Expositio psalmi cxviii*, littera: 21, cap.: 4; *Epistulae*, lib.: 1, epist.: 2, par.: 2; *Epistulae*, lib.: 1, epist.: 2, par.: 10, lineae 86 and 88. Other possible Eucharistic references: *Explanatio psalmorum xii*, psalmus: 35, cap.: 2; *De Helia et ieiunio*, cap.: 12, par.: 43; *Expositio psalmi cxviii*, littera: 18, cap.: 37; *Epistulae*, lib.: 10, epist.: 76, par.: 5.

[13] Jerome, "Commentary on Galatians 2," in *St. Jerome Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Andrew Cain (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 167. MPL, 26, c. 331–468.

[14] Augustine, "Sermon 228B," in *Sermons III/6 (184-229Z) on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1993), 261–262. CCSL 41.

comprehending how the clouds or fire are produced, and compares this with what the *infantes* (i.e. the newly baptized) understand about what they see in the celebration of the Eucharist:

> No more do the "infants" know about what is put on the altar and is consumed at the end of the Eucharistic celebration [*pietatis celebratione*]; they do not know where it comes from, or how it is effected, or how it gets its religious function. If they never learned by their own or other people's experience, and if they never saw that sort of thing except when it is offered and distributed at the celebration of the mysteries, and if they were told on the weightiest authority whose body and blood it is, they would imagine that this was the form, and no other, in which the Lord appeared to his disciples, that it was this sort of body which was pierced by the lance, and this sort of liquid which flowed from it.[15]

The African Church's strong faith in the reality of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ[16] is able to see the continuity of the Cross in the Eucharistic sacrifice, as Augustine writes beautifully and with theological sagacity in his commentary on Psalm 140:

> *Let my prayer rise like incense before you, and the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice*. Every Christian knows that this verse is customarily understood of Christ the head, for as the day drew on toward evening the Lord laid down his life on the cross in order to take it up again. It was not snatched from him against his will. All the same, we too were prefigured there, for what was it that hung on the cross? The body of Christ had been taken from us. Moreover, how could it ever happen that God the Father should forsake and abandon his only Son, who most certainly is one God with him? Yet when he fastened our weak nature to the cross, *our old humanity was nailed to the cross with him* [Rom 6:6], as the apostle teaches, and he cried out in the voice of that old humanity of ours, *O God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* [Ps 21:22 (22:1)] The evening sacrifice is the Lord's passion, the Lord's cross, the offering of the saving victim in a holocaust acceptable to God.[17]

After identifying the "evening sacrifice" with "the Lord's Cross," the Bishop of Hippo makes the transition, saying that the Cross and Resurrection give us the "morning oblation":

> Through his resurrection his evening sacrifice was transformed into a morning oblation. Because of him, every prayer purely directed from the heart of a believer

[15] Augustine, *The Trinity*, III, 3, 21, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), 139–140. CCSL 50.

[16] See Jesús Solano, SJ, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos* (Madrid: B.A.C., 1952), II:271, footnote 83.

[17] Augustine, "On Psalm 140:4," *Expositions of the Psalms* [*Enarrationes in Psalmos*] *121–150,* trans. Maria Boulding, OSB (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 2004), 305. CCSL 40.

rises like incense, as from a holy altar. Nothing is more delightful than this fragrance of the Lord. May all who believe send forth the same fragrance.[18]

Could this text be read as an allusion to the morning oblation of the Eucharist? When Augustine writes in this passage about the Lord's Passion and Cross, he does so in relation to the historical event that occurred in the evening of Good Friday. After the Resurrection, the historical Cross bears a sacramental fruit: the morning oblation [*munus matutinum*] that is a prayer offered with pure hearts, which might be understood as the offering of the Eucharist, celebrated then in Hippo and elsewhere only in the morning.[19] Two further reasons suggest this reading: first, the ritual language of the text and Augustine's use of the term "oblation" [*munus*],[20] so similar in its meaning to *leitourgia* [liturgy] as "public service"; second, the way in which the Bishop of Hippo interpreted the psalms, based on the Christology and soteriology of the *admirabile commercium* [admirable exchange]. For Augustine, the doctrine of the *totus Christus* [the whole Christ] was a fundamental key for the interpretation of psalms. This is true not only in regard to the idea that in the psalms Christ sometimes speaks in his name and sometimes in ours, but also in the sense that some of his expressions are spoken by Christ as Head *and* Body.[21] In this sense, the sacrifice of Christ is not only the sacrifice offered on the Cross by Jesus, but it also becomes, at the same time, the oblation offered by the Body of Christ: the evening sacrifice of Christ continues in the morning oblation of the Church.

The Eucharist cannot be understood except through the Cross. It is not an event that happened at the Last Supper without any connection to the sacrifice of Good Friday. St. Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia (+410), writes of the Eucharist as the inheritance received on the very night in which Christ was given up to be crucified:

> The heavenly sacrifice, instituted by Christ, is the most gracious legacy of his new covenant. On the night he was delivered up to be crucified he left us this gift as a pledge of his abiding presence.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See Robin M. Jensen and J. Patout Burns, "Eucharistic Liturgy," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 338. The only evening celebration of the Eucharist was on Holy Thursday.

[20] *Munus* is understood as "something given as a duty, a tribute, offering (to deities, the dead, etc.)." *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1146.

[21] See on this Michael Fiedrowicz, general introduction to *Augustine: Expositions of the Psalms* [Enarrationes in Psalmos] *1–32*, trans. Maria Boulding, OSB (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 2000), 51–52.

This sacrifice is our sustenance on life's journey; by it we are nourished and supported along the road of life until we depart from this world and make our way to the Lord. For this reason he addressed these words to us: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in you.[22]

The gift of the Eucharistic presence of Christ was given to us on the night when he was delivered up to be crucified. Wood and bread are but one mystery. Another passage, as interpreted by some ancient authors, shows the continuity between Cross and Eucharist: "Let us put wood on his bread" (Jer 11:19).[23] The African rhetor Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325) explains the prophecy of the Cross in a Eucharistic way in his *Divine Institutes*, written between 304 and 324:

Jeremiah, too, said, "Show me, O Lord, and I shall know. Then I saw their plots. And I was carried as a meek lamb to be the victim." They devised counsels against me, saying, "Let us put wood on his bread and cut him off from the land of the living, and his name shall be remembered no more." Now the wood signifies the cross and the bread his body, because he is himself the food and life of all who believe in the flesh that he put on and by which he hung on the cross.[24]

From the Cross we receive the bread, the food of life. St. Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604) also interprets the same text relating the mysteries of the Cross and of the Eucharist: "Thus the Cross is denoted by 'the tree,' when it is said, Let us put the tree into his bread [Jer. 11, 19, V.]; for to 'put the tree into the bread' is to apply the Cross to the Body of our Lord."[25] The tree is united to the bread of life; in the Eucharist is received the same body which hung on the Cross.

[22] Gaudentius of Brescia, "Tractatus XXI," 2, 26. Taken from Liturgy of the Hours, Office of Readings for Thursday of the Second Week of Easter. CSEL 68. On Gaudentius' Eucharistic writings, see Dominic Keech, *Gaudentius of Brescia on Baptism and the Eucharist* (Chippenham: Alcuin Club and The Group for Renewal of Worship, 2013), 43–52.

[23] Cyprian of Carthage, in the third century, saw in this text a reference to "the Jews [who] would fasten Christ to the cross." Cyprian, "To Quirinus: Testimonies against the Jews," 2, 20:23, in *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, ed. Dean O. Wenthe (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 100. See also Tertullian, *Adversus Martionem*, 4, 40; Rufinus, *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*, 22.26.

[24] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* IV, 14, 21, in *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, Wenthe, 99. CSEL 19.

[25] Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, 12, 4 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844), II:48. CCSL 143A.

Eastern Authors

Several Eastern Fathers also write about the continuity between Cross and Eucharist. In his *Demonstrations*, Aphraates (ca. 270–345), a Syrian monk born in Persia, compares the old and the new Passover: "The Jews remember their sins every year; we commemorate the crucifixion and ignominy of our Savior. They ran away from Pharaoh's captivity on Passover; we were redeemed of Satan's captivity on the day of crucifixion."[26] The contrast between the old and the new Passover helps to highlight the continuity between the offering in the Last Supper and the death on the Cross. The Persian Sage proposes "the unusual notion" that, as Christ offered himself at the institution of the Eucharist, his death began at that point of the Passion.[27] This, however, seems to highlight properly the intimate spiritual unity of the offering of Christ, who gives himself in the Eucharist as he begins his crucifixion: "The Lord, then, with his own hands, gave his body to be eaten, and before they crucified him, gave his blood as drink."[28] The continuity is thus found in the saving event of the Passion: from the supper to the Cross, Jesus gives his life for us, and he continues doing so in the Eucharistic celebration.

On several occasions, St. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople (349–407), also insists on the profound unity between the suffering on the Cross and the offering of the Eucharist. During the Last Supper, as Jesus institutes the divine mysteries, he speaks of his Cross: "He had discoursed with them concerning his passion and Cross."[29] And, at the core of the first Eucharist, he reminds them of his Cross: "By the mysteries again [He] reminds the disciples of His being slain, and in the midst of the meal His discourse is of the Cross, by the continual repeating of the prediction, making His passion easy to receive."[30] The institution of the Eucharist happens in the context of the Passion; they are two moments of one action.

The Lord does not go unwillingly to the Passion, which becomes the new Pasch of the Cross prolonged in the Eucharist. Jesus expresses his disposition with words transmitted by Luke: "I have greatly desired to eat this Pasch with you" (Lk 22:15). Chrysostom asks, "Why then did he say

[26] Aphraates, "Demonstración," 12, in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:250.
[27] See Edward J. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates the Persian Sage* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 80.
[28] Aphraates, "Demonstración," 12, in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:248.
[29] John Chrysostom, "Homily 82," 2, in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, ed. P. Schaff (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 492. MPG 57: 13–472; 58:471–794.
[30] John Chrysostom, "Homily 82," 1, Ibid., 491.

'this Pasch' even though at other times he had observed this feast with them? Why then?" He responds by reading the event of the new Pasch using the Cross as its hermeneutical key: "Because the cross would follow this Pasch. And again he said, 'Father, glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you.' To be sure, in many places we find him foretelling the Passion, desiring that it come to pass and saying that this was the reason he had come into the world."[31] As the Cross follows Christ's Pasch, the Eucharist follows his Cross; it is the same body that was offered at the Supper, was crucified, and is still sacrificed on the altar. This awareness, writes Chrysostom in his commentary to First Corinthians, ought to move the faithful to a worthy Eucharistic communion, knowing that the Eucharistic body is the body of Christ, "this Body the very sun saw sacrificed [*stauromenon*, i.e., crucified], and turned aside his beams; for this both the veil was rent in that moment, and rocks were burst asunder, and all the earth was shaken."[32] With powerful and realistic words, the Eucharistic Doctor tries to elicit awe and reverence before the sacrificed body of the Lord, using later the analogy of the generosity between lovers to illustrate the generosity of Christ, who on the Cross "transferred the service to that which is far more awful and glorious, changing the very sacrifice itself, and instead of the slaughter of irrational creatures, commanding to offer up Himself."[33] The sacrifice of the Cross becomes the liturgical service where we break the bread that brings communion with Christ:

> "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the Body of Christ?" Wherefore said he not, the participation? Because he intended to express something more and to point out how close was the union: in that we communicate not only by participating and partaking, but also by being united. For as that body is united to Christ, so also are we united to him by this bread.
>
> But why adds he also, "which we break?" For although in the Eucharist one may see this done, yet on the cross not so, but the very contrary. For, "A bone of Him," saith one, "shall not be broken." But that which He suffered not on the cross, this He suffers in the oblation for thy sake, and submits to be broken, that he may fill all men.[34]

[31] John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, 7:46, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 204. MPG 48: 755–768.

[32] John Chrysostom, "Homily 24," 7, in *Homilies on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. H. K. Cornish, J. Medley, and T. B. Chambers and ed. P. Schaff (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1899), 142. MPG 61: 9–382.

[33] John Chrysostom, Ibid. [34] John Chrysostom, Ibid., 139–140.

"That which He suffered not on the Cross, this He suffers in the oblation": there is a direct relation of continuity between the Cross and the Eucharist. In a harmonious view of union and development, the latter brings to completion what the former began. This fullness and continuity is more than a moving analogy. The power of this reality makes the Bishop of Constantinople say that "someone who profanes the supper is like a priest who pours the blood out, making the death appear to be a slaughter and not a sacrifice. It is like those who pierced Jesus on the Cross ... The person who comes to the supper unworthily does much the same thing and gains nothing by it."[35] The same thing is done; the similitude is more than a comparison, as we partake in the supper of what was offered on the Cross.

Cyrillonas (ca. 396), a Syriac poet influenced by Ephrem,[36] beautifully expresses Jesus' desire for his Passion, which will give us the Eucharist: "Come, receive me, I ask you; eat me, for I long for it. With the teeth of fire crush my bones and with the bodily tongue drink by sips my warm blood."[37] Cyrillonas' approach to the Eucharist is strongly realistic[38] and is expressed in powerful language. It is Jesus himself who longs for the Eucharist; who desires to be eaten, crushed, and drunk by his disciples. Just as he longed for his Passion, he longs for the Eucharist as a *continuum* of the same sacrifice which invites his disciples freely to receive his love that keeps flowing from Golgotha, through the bread and wine, in all its sweetness: "They saw the Cluster hanging / high at the head of the Cross; / Golgotha became its vine-plant / and from it sweetness looked out. / With their lips they received its [his] blood, / and seized with their hands his

[35] John Chrysostom, "Homily 27," 6, *Homilies on the First Letter to the Corinthians*, in *1–2 Corinthians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, VII, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 114.

[36] The identity of this relatively unknown author is not very clear. See Sebastian Brock, "Cyrillonas," in *New Pauly: Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World,* ed. Hubert Canick and Helmuth Schneider (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), IV:10.

[37] Cyrillonas, "Homilía 1 sobre la Pascua de Cristo," in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:703. The idea of warm blood was an indication that the blood that flowed from Christ's side was still circulating. This has been represented, from the sixth century, in the Byzantine rite of the *zeon*, in which warm water is added to the consecrated chalice before communion. See Richard Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 51.

[38] See P. Bruns, "Cyrillonas," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, eds. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings (New York: Herder, 2000), 159.

truth. / The Vine is Christ who came to us, / reached out to us the Cluster in love."[39]

Finally, Elise Vardapet (ca. 645), an Armenian historian and exegete,[40] as he comments on the Lord's Prayer, says that when we pray for our daily bread, we are asking for the Lord himself who said "This is my body": "Although he cannot be broken, for love of you he was broken, and to you, who in your will were broken, he has united himself in his divinity, which cannot be broken . . . On Friday he was crucified to break death . . . One day he gave himself as bread in the upper room, and from then, he always gives himself now as bread in the churches on the holy altar."[41] The link between the Cross and the institution of the Eucharist is clear, leading to the continuation of those mysteries at the celebration of the altar. Furthermore, the Cross is the origin of the Eucharist, as will be seen in the next section.

2 THE CROSS AS THE ORIGIN OF THE EUCHARIST

The mystery of the Eucharist is a fruit of the mystery of the Cross. Several texts of theological profundity and literary beauty express the idea of the Cross as the tree of life that gives the Eucharist, new fruit of paradise, born from the open side of the Crucified Lord.

Western Authors

The Eucharist is the food of life that comes from the Cross. St. Jerome writes, "We ourselves make the spiritual memorial that is fulfilled as a result of the Cross of the Lord and Savior."[42] The spiritual memorial, that is, the Eucharistic sacrifice, is a result of the Cross, which is the new tree of life that offers the true food of life. Tyconius (ca. 330–390), an African Donatist of great influence in the Middle Ages, affirms this in his commentary on Revelation: "Indeed, the tree of life is the wisdom of God,

[39] Cyrillonas, "On the Pasch," 347–354, in Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 124.

[40] For the problem of Elise Vardapet's identity, see Berthold Altaner, *Patrology* (New York: Herder, 1960), 412.

[41] Elise Vardapet, "Explicación de la oración del Padre nuestro," in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, II:522.

[42] Jerome, "Commentary on Ezekiel 37:11," in *Ezekiel, Daniel*, eds. Kenneth Stevenson and Michael Glerup (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 124. CCSL 75.

the Lord Jesus Christ, who hung on the Cross. In the church and in the spiritual paradise, he gives to the faithful food of life and the sacrament of the celestial bread."[43] The Cross, then, provides the food of life, the body of the Lord truly present through the grace of God at work in the Church. This is also clear for St. Augustine, who emphatically says, "We too are fed from the Lord's Cross . . . when [*quia*, i.e. because] we eat his body."[44] The power of the expression is significant: eating the body of the Lord is being fed directly from the Cross. In a similar manner, St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola (355–431), writes to Severus, "That cross has won for men the Food of life, has won also the crowns which gain a portion with the Lord for His servants. The flesh which I eat was nailed to the cross; from the cross flows that blood by which I drink life and cleanse my heart."[45] The same Paulinus, meditating on the symbolism of the almond rod (cf. Gen 30:37), writes in one of his poems, "Its hard covering consists of the tidings of the cross and the food of that cross, and it encloses within the divine remedy in the flesh of Christ."[46]

The food of life comes from the Cross. The mystery of the Eucharist is given through the sacrifice of the crucifixion. The offering of Christ on the Cross becomes the source of the mysterious outpouring of blood and water, which is seen by numerous patristic writers as a symbol of the sacraments of the Church – particularly of the Eucharist and Baptism[47] – born from the side of the crucified Lord.[48] Thus, several authors explain the Cross as the origin of the Eucharist as they comment on John 19:34.

[43] Tyconius, "Commentary on Apocalypse 7:2," in *Revelation*, ed. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 23. Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger Gryson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 25. CCSL 107A.

[44] Augustine, "On Psalm 100:9," in *Expositions of the Psalms* [Enarrationes in Psalmos], *99–120*, trans. Maria Boulding, OSB. (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 2003), 40. CCSL 39.

[45] Paulinus of Nola, "Letter 32," 7, in *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, ed. P. G. Walsh (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1967), II:142. CSEL 29.

[46] Paulinus of Nola, "Poem 27," verse 273, in *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, ed. P. G. Walsh (New York: The Newman Press, 1975), II:280. CSEL 30.

[47] Some authors commenting on John 19:34 speak of two Baptisms: the sacrament of Baptism and martyrdom. See, for example, Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 22,10 (CSEL 20, 219–273); *De Baptismo* 9,4 (CSEL 20, 201–218; 16); Jerome, *Epistula* 69 (CSEL 54, 678–700).

[48] Throughout the development of this chapter we will use several passages that comment on John 19:34. For examples of other references to John 19:34 in authors not included in this work, see Origen, *Commentarii in Iohannem* 2,61 (GCS 10, 3–480; 562–563); *Contra Celsum* 2,36.69 (SChr 136); Novatian, *De Trinitate* 10,7 (CCSL 4, 11–78); Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstratio evangelica* X,8,75 (GCS 23, 2–496); Athanasius, *Sermo de Patientia* 9 (MPG 26,1297–1309); Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus mysteriorum*

St. Ambrose, writing about the patriarchs, explains that Jesus is both the vine and the grape from which we receive the blood that redeems us: "Jacob spoke of [our Lord as] a grape, because Christ hung on the wood like a grape. He is the vine; he is the grape. He is the vine because he cleaves to the wood and the grape because, when his side was opened by the soldier's lance, He sent forth water and blood . . . water for baptism, blood for redemption. The water washed us; the blood redeemed us."[49] The same Bishop of Milan, in his treatise *On Virgins*, reflects upon the body of the Lord as he reminds his readers that the Lord was pained at the death of Lazarus, that "he was wounded during his sufferings, that water and blood came out of the wound [cf. John 19:34], and then he breathed forth his spirit [cf. John 19:30]." Then he elaborates on the meaning of these events: "The water was for washing, the blood for drinking and the spirit for resurrection. For the one Christ is for us hope, faith and charity – hope in the resurrection, faith in the washing and charity in the sacrament."[50] Admirably, Ambrose relates the events of the Passion to the sacramental life of the Church, specifically to Baptism ("the washing") and the Eucharist ("the sacrament"), and also to the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. It is noteworthy that the Eucharist is simply called "the sacrament": "the daily sacrament of the Lord Jesus' Passion,"[51] and "the heavenly and venerable sacrament."[52]

Augustine says that the open side of Christ becomes the open gate of salvation, from where we receive the sacraments: blood for the remission of sins and water to be mixed in the cup:

> The Evangelist used a wide awake word so that he did not say, "pierced his side" or "wounded" or anything else, but "opened," so that there, in a manner of speaking, the door of life was thrown open from which the mystical rites [*sacramenta*] of the Church flowed, without which one does not enter into the

2,9 (SChr 19bis,72–162); Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* 32 (James Henry Srawley, Cambridge Patristic Texts 2); *Gregory of Nazianzus*, Oratio 45,29 (MPG 36, 457–664); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis ad illuminandos* 3,10 CPG 3585); 13,8.20.21.39 (Rupp, Hildesheim) 2, 2–342.

[49] Ambrose, "On the Patriarchs," 4, 24, in *Saint Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. Michael P. McHugh (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1972), 255. CSEL 32, 2.

[50] Ambrose, "On Virgins," III, 5, 22 in *Ambrose*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, OP (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 111. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 14, 1. See also Ambrose, *Explanation on Psalm XII*, 37:20,2. CSEL 62.

[51] Ambrose, *Explanation on Psalm XII*, 43, 37. CSEL 64.

[52] Ambrose, "The Sacraments," 5, 4, in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, 317. CSEL 73.

life which is true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water provides the proper mix for the health-giving cup; it offers both bath and drink.[53]

And, in a clear example of his typological exegesis, the Bishop of Hippo sees several prefigurations of the Gospel in Old Testament events:

> There was a foretelling of this in that Noe was ordered to make a door in the side of the ark where the animals that were not going to perish in the flood might enter, and in these [animals] the Church was prefigured. For this reason the first woman was made from the side of a sleeping man, and she was called the life and the mother of the living . . .. Here the second Adam, his head bowed, slept on the cross in order that from there might be found for him a wife – that one who flowed from the side of the One sleeping. O death from which the dead live again! What is cleaner than this blood? What is more healthful than this wound?[54]

The open side of Jesus fulfills the Old Testament images of salvation: there, salvation from the deluge is offered and the Spouse of Christ is born as he bows his head dying on the Cross. From his wound, believers receive both a cleansing bath and drink to quench their thirst. Hence, the Cross is the font from which we receive these two foundational sacraments, which Quodvultdeus (+ca. 453), bishop of Carthage and friend of Augustine, calls "the twin sacraments of the church" born on the Cross:

> Let him sleep by dying. Let his side be opened, and let the virgin church come forth. Just as when Eve was made from the side of a sleeping Adam, so the church was formed from the side of Christ, hanging on the cross. For his side was pierced, as the gospel says, and immediately there flowed out blood and water, which are the twin sacraments of the church: the water, which became her bath; the blood, which became her dowry.[55]

The new Adam gives us, from a new tree, the greatest gift, the new portion, the food of life. It was on the Cross that "the flesh of Christ was prepared" for us to eat, fulfilling the images of the manna, as the same Quodvultdeus writes.[56]

St. Faustus of Riez, abbot and bishop in Gaul (ca. 410–495), explains the roots of the long custom of mixing wine with water as something that comes not only from tradition but from the nature of the Passion itself, for

[53] Augustine, "Tract 120," 2, in *St. Augustine. Tractates on the Gospel of John 112–24. Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, ed. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 46. CCSL 36.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Quodvultdeus, "Homily 1," 6, 4–5, in *Quodvultdeus of Carthage: The Creedal Homilies. Conversion in Fifth-Century North Africa*, trans. Thomas Macy Finn (New York: The Newman Press, 2004), 37. CCSL 60.

[56] See Quodvultdeus, *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei*, 1, 39. CCSL 60.

water and blood flowed from the Lord's side. This salutary practice opens for us the door to his grace, which comes through his sacramental presence, prefigured in Old Testament images such as the rock, wisdom, seven columns, wine, and bread. In this way, we have access to his mercy. "See that to him who drinks from Christ's grace, Christ's mercy follows him."[57]

Another way in which the mystery of the Cross as origin of the Eucharist is explained is through the image of the rock opened for our salvation (cf. Num 20:2–11), a prophecy which is fulfilled in the open side of the crucified Christ. Jesus himself is the rock opened at the Cross, giving thus the sacraments from which we soberly become inebriated.[58] Recalling the doubts of Moses before the wood touched the rock, Augustine reflects on the doubts of the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13–35). "The disciples doubted, when they saw the Lord crucified ... There you are, doubt arose, because wood had come into contact with the rock. What Moses figuratively stood for was fulfilled."[59] The scandal of the Cross was received with doubt by these disciples, who finally recognized the presence of the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, healing the doubts of Moses with their faith in the new wood and its Eucharistic fruit.

The Eucharist is given in the form of bread and wine. Needless to say, after their consecration, they are not ordinary bread or wine. The wine becomes "wine of blood," and thus the Cross is seen as a winery by Gaudentius: "The wine of his blood, gathered from many grapes of the vine planted by him, is crushed in the winery of the Cross."[60] In the view of St. Caesarius of Arles (460–542), bishop and popular preacher in Gaul, the Cross is the instrument that gives us that wine: "we will be able to drink with a secure conscience of that spiritual grape from which the wine of joy was extracted by the weight of the cross."[61] This wine of joy is,

[57] Solano claims that Faustus is the author of this text. See Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos,* II:511, especially footnote 168. The Latin text is contained in the collection of homilies by Eusebius Gallicanus. Some say that these sermons are a sixth-century work that contains some material from Faustus. See Thomas A. Smith, "Faustus of Riez," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, 357. Eusebius "Gallicanus," *Collectio homiliarum*, Hom.: 17. CCSL 101.

[58] See in Quodvultdeus, *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei*, 1, 39. CCSL 60.

[59] Augustine, "Sermon 352," 4, in *Sermons III/10 (341–400) on Various Subjects*, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1994), 142. PL 39; CCSL 41.

[60] Gaudentius of Brescia, *Tractatus XXI*, 2. CSEL 68.

[61] Caesarius of Arles, "Sermon 107," 4, in *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons (81–186)*, trans. Sister Mary Magdaleine Mueller, OSF (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), II:134–135. CCSL 103; 104.

indeed, blood, blood of grape: "Blood of grape is . . . certainly, the blood shed in the same passion of the Lord, with which every day we satiate ourselves on the sacred altars,"[62] writes Verecundus (+552), Bishop of Junca in North Africa.

The Cross produces not only the wine of blood, but also the bread of life. The Cross is the tree of life; its wood saves us from death. In a symbolic interpretation of the Old Testament (1 Kgs 17:8–16), Caesarius of Arles sees in the wood a symbol of the Cross, from which we are fed. Commenting on the widow who fed Elijah after gathering two sticks of wood, he says:

> Truly, the cross of our Lord and Savior was prepared from two pieces of wood, and so that widow was gathering two sticks because the church would believe in him who hung on two pieces of wood. For this reason that widow said, "I am gathering two sticks that I may make food for me and my son, and we will eat it and die." It is true, beloved; no one will merit to believe in Christ crucified unless he dies to this world. For if a person wishes to eat the body of Christ worthily, he must die to the past and live for the future.[63]

The food of life comes from the tree of the Cross, the two sticks on which we are invited to die to the past in order to receive the true life given by Christ. The Cross gives us the food and drink that transform us, as long as we receive the Eucharist with love and accept the Cross in our own lives. Similarly, commenting on the tree of life that gives fruit all year round (cf. Rev 22:1), the same Caesarius indicates that the faithful, bathed in the waters of Baptism, eat from the Cross in order to produce fruit in their own lives: "It is speaking of the cross of the Lord. There is no tree that bears fruit in every season except the cross that the faithful, who are made wet by the water of the church's river, eat. And these [faithful] in turn produce eternal fruit in every season."[64] Indeed, Christians are called to become what they celebrate, crucifying their flesh, as the Bishop St. Fulgentius of Ruspe (460–533) exhorts his flock:

> When we share in the Lord's body and blood, when we eat his bread and drink his cup, this truly means that we die to the world and have our hidden life with Christ in God, crucifying our flesh and its weaknesses and its desires. Thus it is that all the

[62] Verecundus of Junca, *Commentarii super cantica ecclesiastica*, In cant. Deuteronomii, cap.: 15. CCSL 93.

[63] Caesarius of Arles, "Sermon 124," 3, in *Sermons (81–186)*, II:211. CCSL 103.

[64] Caesarius of Arles, "Exposition on the Apocalypse," 22,2, Homily 19, in *Latin Christian Commentaries on Revelation. Victorinus of Petrovium, Apringius of Beja, Caesarius of Arles and Bede the Venerable*, trans. and ed. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 107. *S. Caesarii opera omnia*, ed. G. Morin (1942), II:275.

faithful who love God and their neighbour drink the cup of the Lord's love even if they do not drink the cup of bodily suffering. Soaked through with that drink, they mortify the flesh in which they walk this earth. Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ like a cloak, their desires are no longer those of the body. They do not contemplate what can be seen but what is invisible to the eyes. This is how the cup of the Lord is drunk when divine love is present; but without that love, you may even give your body to be burned and still it will do you no good.[65]

With love, the faithful receive this food from the Cross, also seen as an altar. On the threshold from the patristic to the medieval periods, St. Bede (672–735), the English monk and historian, explains how Christ brings to fruition the sacraments of the law: "While eating the desired Passover with his disciples at a foreordained time, as morning was breaking, he finally offers the most pure sacrament of his body and blood, consecrated on the altar of the cross for imbuing the faithful, as though it were the unleavened bread of the promised land."[66] It is on the Eucharistic altar that the Church receives the fruits of the Cross:

Not only did he wash away our sins in his blood when he gave his blood for us on the cross, or when each of us was cleansed in his baptism by the mystery of his most sacred passion. But he also takes away every day the sins of the world and washes us of our daily sins in his blood, when the memory of his blessed passion is reenacted on the altar, when a created thing, bread and wine, is transformed by the ineffable sanctification of the Spirit into the sacrament of his flesh and blood.[67]

The daily celebration of the Eucharist reenacts the offering of the passion through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The Cross, as seen in the previous texts, is the origin of the Eucharist; from it, as an altar, we partake in the sacrificial death of Christ as we eat and drink from his sacrament, the food of life that comes from the new tree of life.

[65] Fulgentius of Ruspe, "Against Fabian," fragment 28, in www.crossroadsinitiative.com /library_article/1234/Offering_the_Holy_Sacrifice_of_the_Eucharist_Fulgentius.html. CCSL 91A.

[66] Bede, "Exposition of the Gospel of Luke," VI, 22:13, in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*, ed. John R. Franke (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 30. CCSL 120. On the *altare cruces*, see also in Bede *De tabernaculo*, 3. CCSL 119A, and *In Lucae euangelium expositio*, 5, 20. CCSL 120.

[67] Bede, "Homily 15," Book 1, *Bede the Venerable. Homilies on the Gospels*, Book 1, *Advent to Lent*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst, OSB (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 149. CCSL 122.

Eastern Authors

Eastern writers also speak about the Cross as origin of the Eucharist, fruit of the open side of the crucified one. The Eucharist is not "produced" by the priest, but, as St. John Chrysostom says, is given by "Christ himself, who was crucified for us. The priest stands, fulfilling the original pattern, and speaks those words; but the power and grace come from God."[68] With this awareness, the same Chrysostom reflects on the symbolism of the open side of the Crucified One (cf. Jn 19:34) in a realistic manner: we should participate in the Eucharist with the awareness that the blood is poured from the open and immaculate side to the chalice, for our purification,[69] and that we should drink of the salutary blood as if we were approaching Jesus' side opened at the Cross.[70] In his commentary on the Gospel of John, the Eucharistic Doctor draws the contrast between the wicked will of those who pierced Jesus' side and the mysterious fulfillment of the prophecy that invites the incredulous to believe:

> Nevertheless, to please the Jews, they pierced His side with a spear, and now offered insult to His lifeless body. Oh, what a brutal and accursed act! However, do not be disturbed, do not be dejected, beloved. For, the very things which they did for a wicked purpose became powerful champions of truth. There was indeed a prophecy which said: "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." And not this only, but also this brazen deed would become evidence to confirm the faith of future unbelievers, such as Thomas, and others like him.

In the same text, Chrysostom goes further in his explanation of this passage; he sees in it the beginning of the sacramental mysteries that give life to the Church:

> Moreover, in addition to this, an ineffable mystery was also accomplished, for "There came out blood and water." It was not accidentally or by chance that these streams came forth, but because the Church has been established from both of these. Her members know this, since they have come to birth by water and are nourished by Flesh and Blood. The Mysteries have their source from there, so that when you approach the awesome chalice you may come as if you were about to drink from His very side.[71]

[68] John Chrysostom, "On the Treason of the Jews," 1.6, in Bettenson, *Later Christian Fathers*, 173; cited in Christopher A. Hall, *Worshiping with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 67. MPG 49, 373–392.

[69] John Chrysostom, "On Penance," Homily 9. MPG 49, 277–350. [70] Ibid.

[71] John Chrysostom, "Homily 85," in *Saint John Chrysostom. Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist. Homilies 48–88*, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, SCH (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1960), 435. MPG 59, 23–482.

The mysteries take their source from the Cross. Indeed, Chrysostom says, "If you want to know better the strength of Christ's blood, remember the first origin from which it flowed; this blood shed from the wound of the side of the crucified Lord. The water is the symbol of Baptism; the blood is the symbol of the sacrament."[72] The Eucharist is, simply, *the* sacrament;[73] remembering its origin helps the believer to fruitfully receive its strength.

Also commenting on John 19:34, at the beginning of the fifth century, Bishop Theodoret of Cyrus (393–ca. 460) writes in his treatise on the Incarnation about the two streams that flow from Jesus' side: the stream of Baptism that confers immortality, and the stream of the Eucharist, which feeds us as milk feeds babes:

> His side was pierced as Adam's was; yet there came forth not a woman who, being beguiled, was to be the death-bearer, but a fountain of life that regenerates the world by its two streams: the one to renew us in the baptismal font and clothe us with the garment of immortality, the other to feed us, the reborn, at the table of God, just as babes are nourished with milk.[74]

Theodoret also, in his dialogue *Eranistes*, explains that the springs of blood and water that flowed out from the Lord's side, in running over his body, fulfilled Jacob's prophecy of washing his robe in wine and his garment in the blood of the grape. The Eucharist purifies and feeds:

[72] John Chrysostom, "Homilía a los bautizados," in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos Primitivos* (Madrid: B.A.C., 1952), I:662. Migne includes this homily in his collection under the title "spurious." However, it is now commonly accepted as a *bona fide* work of Chrysostom, especially after the work of S. Heidacher, *Eine unbeachtete Rede des hl. Chrysostomus au Neugetaufte*: ZkathTh 28 (1904). See SChr 50, 174–177.

[73] Other authors talk about the Eucharist in a similar way, like Theodore of Mopsuestia: "our participation in the Sacrament" ("Commentary on the Eucharist," 5); "communion of the Holy Sacrament" ("Commentary on Baptism," 2), in Mingana, *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 74; 20–21. Relatedly, in Narsai, "Then the priest himself first receives the Sacrament"; "the Sacrament goes forth on the paten and in the cup with splendor and glory." Narsai of Nisibis, "Homily XVII (A): An Exposition of the Mysteries," in *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, trans. R. Hugh Connolly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 27.

[74] Theodoret of Cyrus, *On the Incarnation of the Lord*, 27, found in Liturgy of the Hours, Office of Readings for Monday, XIX Week in Ordinary Time. MPG 75 (Paris: Migne, 1857–1866): 1420–1477. There is no published critical edition of this treatise. For its reconstruction and contents, see István Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus's Double Treatise on the Trinity and on the Incarnation: The Antiochene Pathway to Chalcedon* (Kolozsvár/Cluj: The Transylvanian District of the Reformed Church in Romania, 2007)," in www.proteo.hu/dok/PKI/PKI_PhD_Full_text.pdf

Orthodox. When the soldiers pierced the savior's side with the lance, what flowed out of it according to the Gospel writers [Jn 19:34]?

Eranistes. Blood and water.

Orthodox. He called the savior's blood, therefore, blood of a grape. For if the Lord was called a vine, and if the fruit of the vine is called wine, and if springs of blood and water poured from the Lord's side and ran over the rest of his body to the ground, then the patriarch's prophecy was reasonable and appropriate: "He will wash his robe in wine and his garment in blood of the grape" [Gn 49:11].[75]

Early Christian authors constantly read the Old Testament through Christ as its fulfillment. All the prophecies point to him and his mysteries, and so, logically, the Eucharist was also seen as the fulfillment of ancient realities. Along these lines, Pseudo-Hippolytus (after fourth century)[76] writes about the parallel between the old and the new tree, the old and the new hand, saying that we are fed and nourished from the Cross:

So in place of the old tree he plants a new one; in place of the wicked hand which was formerly extended in a godless gesture, there is his own immaculate hand closed in a gesture of godliness, showing his whole life hanging [on the cross]. You, o Israel, you were unable to eat it, but we, with a spiritual and indestructible knowledge, have eaten it, and because we have done so we will not die.

For me the cross is the tree of eternal salvation; from it I nourish myself, from it I feed myself.[77]

The Cross is the font of true nourishment and eternal salvation: we can see here a reference to the Eucharist as the fruit of this new tree which the immaculate hand offers to the Church to be eaten. The blood of Christ, fruit of his death on the Cross, gives life and resurrection as we drink from it, as affirmed by the Monophysite Bishop and prolific poet Jacob of Sarug (451–521): "The blood of the Crucified one distills resurrection, drop by drop, on the souls and grants them the strength to reach him."[78]

[75] Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 1, in *Theodoret of Cyrus: Eranistes*, trans. Gerhard H. Ettlinger, SJ (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 46. G. H. Ettlinger, *Theodoret of Cyrus. Eranistes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 61–266.

[76] This work is listed among the "uncertain" texts of Hippolytus. See B. R. Suchla, "Hippolytus," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, 287. For a more detailed study on the author and date of this text, see *Homélies paschales I: une homélie inspirée du traité sur la Pâque d'Hippolyte*, SChr 27, trans. and ed. P. Nautin (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2003), 33–48.

[77] Pseudo-Hippolytus, "On the Pasch," L-LI, 1, in Lawrence J. Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church. An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2009), III:240. See Nautin, *Homélies paschales I*, 176–177. SChr 27.

[78] Jacob of Sarug, "Homilía sobre el recuerdo de los difuntos y sobre el sacrificio eucarístico," in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, II:565–566.

The Cross strengthens those who receive the Eucharist: as wine that has been distilled, the Cross offers its fruit, drop by drop, thus inviting believers to a patient and perseverant participation.

It is from the Cross that we receive the same body that was taken down and placed in the tomb; consequently, the Eucharistic altar becomes a symbol of the tomb, as St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (ca. 730) vividly describes:

> The spiritual powers and the choirs of angels, after seeing the Economy accomplished through the Cross and death of Christ and His victory against death and His descent into Hades and His third-day Resurrection, cry out with us ALLELUIA.
>
> This is also in imitation of the burial of Christ wherein Joseph, after taking His body down from the Cross, wrapped it in clean linen after he had anointed it with spices and ointments, and carried it, with Nicodemus, and buried it in the new tomb cut from rock. The symbol of the Holy Tomb is the altar and the repository, for on it is placed the immaculate and all-holy Body.[79]

The Cross is the tree of life; the tomb becomes the altar; the crucified body is present in the Eucharistic body; the Cross and the Resurrection communicate victory in the sacred liturgy. The Cross is, truly, the origin of the Eucharist, as seen in the texts of this section: from the crucified side of the new Adam, true rock of salvation, we receive the sacraments of the Church; the Cross is the tree of life from which we are fed with the new manna and the blood of grape from which we become soberly inebriated.[80] This unceasing source of grace invites the believer constantly to renew the awe and love for the gift of the Cross that is still given in the Eucharist.

3 THE IDENTITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST WITH THE FLESH AND BLOOD ON THE CROSS

A third theme that frequently recurs in patristic literature is the idea of the flesh and blood of Christ received by the faithful in the Eucharist as identified with the flesh and blood sacrificed in the mystery of the Cross.

[79] *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. Paul Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 45–46.

[80] For a synthesis of patristic images of the Eucharist based on biblical figures, see Hamman, "Eucharist," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, I:856.

Western Authors

Ambrose of Milan explains the realism of the faith in the Eucharist and the necessity of a great awareness of the mystery we confess: "He Himself speaks of His Blood. Before the consecration it is mentioned as something else; after the consecration it is called blood. And you say 'Amen,' that is, 'It is true.' What the mouth speaks, let the mind within confess; what words utter, let the heart feel."[81] The consecration, through the "benediction of the heavenly words,"[82] produces a real transformation in the bread and wine. Before being signed with the Cross and consecrated, the wine is called wine; afterwards, it is called blood, and the "Amen" pronounced at the Eucharistic celebration expresses the faith in this identity: the blood of the Cross is the blood of the altar.

Ambrosiaster, the unknown and influential commentator on the letters of Saint Paul who wrote his works during the pontificate of Pope Damasus (366–384) and who, from the Middle Ages until Erasmus, was believed to be Ambrose of Milan, highlights the close connection between the Lord's death and the celebration of the Eucharist: we remember this act in eating and drinking. "Because we have been set free by the Lord's death, we are indicating that we are the new covenant when we remember this fact in eating and drinking the body and blood, which were given for us."[83] The realistic sense of eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ, who died for our sins, is manifest. Indeed, faith in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not just a symbolic idea, a "figurative" ceremony, but the certainty of a presence "in truth," as Jerome says in his commentary on the words of the institution:

> After the figurative Passover had been fulfilled and he had eaten the flesh of the lamb with the apostles, he took bread, which strengthens the heart of man, and passed over to the true mystery of the Passover. Thus, just as Melchizedek had done, the priest of the Most High God, when he offered bread and wine in the

[81] Ambrose, "The Mysteries," 9, in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, 26. CSEL 73.

[82] Ambrose, "The Mysteries," 9, in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, 26.

[83] Ambrosiaster, "Commentary on First Corinthians 11:23," in *Ambrosiaster. Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, ed. Gerald L. Bray (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 174. CSEL 81, II. Ambrosiaster's commentaries enjoyed great authority during the Middle Ages because these texts were frequently ascribed to Ambrose, as in Abelards' *Sic et Non* (quaestio: 117, sententia: 65), or to Augustine, as in *Decretum magistri Gratiani* (Concordia discordantium canonum) pars: 3 (de consecratione), dist.: 2, canon: 49.

prefiguration of him, he too would present it in the truth of his own body and blood.[84]

Body and blood are not figurative ideas, but solid realities that call for faithful acceptance. It is this acceptance that arouses reverence towards everything related to the Eucharist. Jerome congratulates the Bishop Theophilus for the practical aim of his work, through which he helps the ignorant to learn

> the reverence with which they must handle holy things and minister at Christ's altar; and to impress upon them that the sacred chalices, veils, and other accessories used in the celebration of the Lord's passion are not mere lifeless and senseless objects devoid of holiness, but that rather, from their association with the body and blood of the Lord, they are to be venerated with the same awe as the body and the blood themselves.[85]

The Eucharist is called, simply, the celebration of the Lord's Passion. This is why it ought to be approached with the reverence that inspires having the same awe towards the Eucharistic body and blood as towards the crucified body and blood. They are, indeed, one and the same, and this awareness is the basis for the necessary reverence towards the holy things used at the altar.

Augustine uses precise language to talk about the body and blood of the Lord.[86] In his reply to Faustus, the Manichean Bishop, he writes of "the true sacrifice" of the body and blood of the Lord, "due to the one and true God, with which Christ alone filled God's altar";[87] and in his *The Harmony of the Gospels*, he speaks not simply about the body and blood of the Lord, but of "the mystery of his body and blood": "Matthew proceeds to insert the mystery of His body and blood, as it was committed then by the Lord to the disciples. Here Mark and Luke act correspondingly."[88]

[84] Jerome, "Commentary on Matthew IV, 26:26–27," in *St. Jerome: Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 297. CCSL 77.

[85] Jerome, "Letter CXIV, to Theophilus," 2, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd ser., VI:215. CSEL 55.

[86] On the debate on whether Augustine's Eucharistic theology was symbolic or realistic see Pamela Jackson, "Eucharist," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 332–334; Edward Kilmartin, SJ, "The Eucharistic Gift: Augustine of Hippo's Tractate 27 on John 6: 60–72," in David G. Hunter, *Preaching in the Patristic Age: Studies in Honor of Walter J. Burghardt, SJ* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 162–163.

[87] Augustine, "Against Faustus," 20, 18, in *Augustine: Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, trans. Roland Teske, SJ (New York: New City Press, 2007), 277. CSEL 25.

[88] Augustine, "The Harmony of the Gospels," III, 1, 2, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., VI:178. CSEL 43.

Enlightening the newly baptized on the mysteries, the same Augustine insists on the identification of the Eucharistic bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, which he offered for the forgiveness of sins:

> I had promised those of you who have just been baptized a sermon to explain the sacrament of the Lord's table, which you can see right now, and which you shared in last night. You ought to know what you have received, what you are about to receive, what you ought to receive every day. That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. It was by means of these things that the Lord Christ wished to present us with his body and blood, which he shed for our sake for the forgiveness of sins. If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive.[89]

The transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ occurs through their "sanctification by the word of God."[90] Christians must be aware of this reality: the Eucharist is not a mere symbol, but the very flesh and blood of Christ. This identification is so profound that Augustine can say that Christ carried his own body in his hands: "Christ was being carried in his own hands when he handed over his body, saying, *This is my body* [Mt 26:26]; for he was holding that very body in his hands as he spoke."[91] The personal certainty of the identification of the bread with the body, and the chalice with the blood comes with the act of faith: "What you can see, then, is bread and a cup; that's what even your eyes tell you; but as for what our faith asks to be instructed about, the bread is the body of Christ, the cup the blood of Christ."[92] It is the act of believing that allows a Christian truly to partake in this gift.

Faith opens the door for receiving the revelation of the Eucharist. On the eve of his Passion, the Lord unveiled this mystery, as the bishop of Ravenna St. Peter Chrysologus (380–450) said, he "disclosed the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and revealed the secret of our

[89] Augustine, "Sermon 227," in *Sermons III/6 (184-229Z) on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (New York: New City Press, 1993), 254. SChr 116.

[90] There is a significant similarity with Ambrose's expression *benedictio verborum caelestium*.

[91] Augustine, "Explanation 1 on Psalm 33," in *Expositions of the Psalms* [*Enarrationes in Psalmos*] *33–50*," trans. Maria Boulding, OSB (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 2000), 21. CCSL 38.

[92] Augustine, "Sermon 272," in *Sermons III/7 (230–272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Edmund Hill, OP (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1993), 300. MPL 38.

Redemption."[93] This secret is not merely an idea, but a mystery of love in which we are instructed by Jesus himself: "Those who have been instructed in the heavenly mysteries know how the flesh of Christ is eaten, and how His blood is drunk."[94] Indeed, only those who are loved and love him can have access to "the mysteries of His Passion."[95]

Redemption comes today through the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. This revelation is a gift that emanates from the unconditional love of Christ which led him to his Passion and death, and to commend the sacrament of those realities to the disciples, as Pope St. Leo the Great (late fourth century–461) writes: "It is not to be supposed that the Lord Jesus wanted to withdraw from his Passion and Death, whose sacraments he passed on to his disciples."[96] As his Passion was beginning, Jesus taught "them what kind of victim must be offered up to God" and gave them the mystery of his own sacrifice. In his love, not even Judas was excluded from his flesh and blood, as St. Leo eloquently says in one his homilies:

> Jesus, however, sure of his resolution and fearless in the working out of his Father's plan, was putting an end to the Old Testament and establishing a new Passover. When the "disciples had reclined" with him "to eat" the mystical "supper" while in the atrium of Caiaphas the manner of killing Christ was being discussed, he himself, establishing the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, taught them what kind of victim ought to be offered to God. Even the traitor was not kept away from this mystery . . .
>
> Why, wretched Judas, do you not make use of such great kindness? See how the Lord tolerates your escapades, and how Christ exposes you to no one except yourself. Neither your name nor your person was disclosed, but by the word of truth and mercy the secrets of your own heart alone are touched. Neither the honor of the apostolic order nor the communion of sacraments is denied to you.[97]

This sacrament is offered by Christ with loving gentleness to unworthy disciples, who are called to enter fully into this mystery. Gregory the Great relates the Passover to the "sacrament of his passion," leading to an experiential understanding of the mystery of the "blood of the lamb," which we learn not just by listening, but "by drinking it." The blood of the new Passover is given "for our redemption": not only, therefore, to

[93] Peter Chrysologus, "Sermon 95," in *St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermons. St. Valerian, Homilies*, trans. George E. Ganss (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), I:150. CCSL 24A.

[94] Peter Chrysologus, "Sermon 95," in *St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermons*, I:149. CCSL 24A.

[95] Ibid., I:150.

[96] Leo the Great, "Sermon 58," 4, in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, 252. [translation modified] CCSL 138A.

[97] Leo the Great, "Sermon 58," 3, in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, 250. CCSL 138A.

remember a past event, but to bring its actual efficacy to us today; and its fruit in us should be the disposition to imitate the Lord's Passion. The connection between the sacrament of the Eucharist and the saving power of the Passion is strongly highlighted in this passage:

> What the blood of the lamb is, you have already learnt, not by listening to explanations, but by drinking it. A person proceeds to put the blood on both doorposts, when he swallows it not only with the mouth of the body, but also with the mouth of the heart. That is, the blood of the Lamb is placed on each doorpost when, for our redemption, we physically receive the sacrament of his passion, and we at the same time meditate on it with our minds, so that we might imitate it in our lives. For he who receives the Redeemer's blood without wanting to imitate his passion places the blood only on one side of the door.[98]

Eastern Authors

Similarly, in Alexandria, St. Athanasius (295/300–373) is no less emphatic as he places in Jesus' mouth words that identify the flesh and blood offered by Christ's sacrifice with the food we receive from the altar: "What is shown and is given for the salvation of the world is the flesh I have; and this same flesh and its blood I will give spiritually as food."[99] Athanasius' words are emphatic: "the flesh I have," "this same flesh and its blood" is what we receive as food in the spiritual sacrifice of the Eucharist.

St. Cyril (ca. 313–386/387), the Bishop of Jerusalem whose influence was decisive for the development of devotion to the Cross of Christ, exhorts his listeners to a perfect confidence in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist:

> When the Master himself has explicitly said of the bread, "This is my body," will anyone still dare to doubt? When He is himself our warranty saying, "This is my blood," who will ever waver and say it is not His Blood? ... With perfect confidence, then, we partake as of the body and blood of Christ ... For when His Body and Blood become the tissue of our members, we become Christ-bearers and as the blessed Peter said, "partakers of the divine nature."[100]

[98] Gregory the Great, "Homily 22," 7, in *Reading the Gospels with Gregory the Great: Homilies on the Gospels, 21–26*, trans. Santha Bhattacharji (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 2001), 45. CCSL 141.

[99] Athanasius, "Cartas a Serapión," 4, 19, in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:233. See also *Athanase d'Alexandrie, Lettres à Sérapion sur la Divinité du Saint-Espirit*, trans. Joseph Lebon (Paris: Sources Chrétiennes, 1947), 203.

[100] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Mystagogical Lecture IV, 1.2.3," in *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. Leo P. McCauley, SJ and Anthony A. Stephenson (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1970), II:181–182. SChr 126.

Cyril teaches the newly baptized about the mysteries with a vivid language that emphasizes the reality of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus: rather than doubting, we must accept Jesus' words and thus believe that his body and blood become "tissue of our members."

In the same vein, John Chrysostom, in his meditation on the priesthood, invites his readers to consider the greatness of being "empurpled with that precious blood":

> When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying before you, and the High Priest standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all who partake being tinctured with that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and still standing on earth? Are you not at once transported to heaven, and, having driven out of your soul every carnal thought, do you not with soul naked and mind pure look round upon heavenly things? Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the loving-kindness of God to men! He who sits above with the Father is at that moment held in our hands, and gives himself to those who wish to clasp and embrace him – which they do, all of them with their eyes. Do you think this could be despised? or that it is the kind of thing anyone can be superior about?[101]

Chrysostom's realistic approach to exegesis is patent in this text. When we worship, we receive that precious blood, the same blood coming from the veins of Christ, the same blood given at the Last Supper and then shed on the Cross, the same blood in which Jesus' body was covered: "This is even that Body, the blood-stained, the pierced, and that out of which gushed the saving fountains, the one of blood, the other of water, for all the world."[102] Taking this realism to a great extreme, he says that Christ drank his own blood:

> And He Himself drank of it. For lest on hearing this, they should say, "What then? do we drink blood, and eat flesh?" and then be perplexed (for when He began to discourse concerning these things, even at the very sayings many were offended), therefore lest they should be troubled then likewise, He first did this Himself, leading them to the calm participation of the mysteries. Therefore He Himself drank His own blood. "What then? Must we observe that other ancient rite also?" someone may say. By no means. For on this account He said, "Do this," that He might withdraw them from the other. For if this worketh remission of sins, as it surely doth work it, the other is now superfluous.[103]

[101] John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood: Six Books* III, 4 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 70–71. SChr 272.

[102] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Homily 25, 7, trans. H. K. Cornish, J. Medley, and T. B. Chambers (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1899), 71.

[103] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, Homily 82, ed. P. Schaff (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1888), 492.

The same Eucharistic Doctor also insists on the reality of the Eucharistic presence of the flesh and blood offered at the Passion as he reflects on Judas' treason:

> This is the Body which you, O Judas, sold for thirty pieces of silver; this is the Blood over which, a little while ago, you made shameless agreements with the ungrateful Pharisees. Oh, what love of Christ for mankind! [...] Oh, what madness of Judas! What folly! Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of money, but even after that, Christ would not have failed to offer the Blood that had been sold for the forgiveness of the sins of him who had sold it, if the latter had in fact wished it. For Judas was also present and shared in the holy table.[104]

The words of Chrysostom highlight the contrast between the love of Christ and the "madness" of Judas, who sold the same blood he received at the holy table. Unlike Judas, any disciple will find comfort in the celebration of this sacrament, instituted "for the remission of the sins of the whole world. For, 'This,' saith He, 'is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins.' But this He said, indicating thereby, that His Passion and His Cross are a mystery, by this too again comforting His disciples."[105] The Eucharistic Doctor indicates that the Passion and Cross are a *mystérion*:[106] they are realities that transcend the limitations of what we can produce and make present what we celebrate. The Passion and the Cross offer comfort to the disciples as they learn that in the offering of Christ's body and blood, his love can be not only remembered, but also renewed and made present.

In commenting on the Gospel of Matthew, the Bishop and prolific writer Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428) emphasizes the fact that Jesus did not speak only of a symbol but of a reality: "He did not say: 'This is the symbol of my body,' but: 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood'."[107]

[104] John Chrysostom, "On Judas' Treason," 5, in www.theorthodoxword.com/back%20articles/OW%20PDFs/286/Pages%20from%20OW286%20text.pdf. MPG 49: 373– 392.

[105] John Chrysostom, "Homily 82," 1, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., X:492.

[106] On the word "mystery," see *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1156. On the theological concept of "mystery," see *Dictionary of Theology*, 313–316; A. Michel, "Mystère," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, X:2585–2599. In relation to the patristic use of "mystery": *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 891–893.

[107] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Matthew* 26:26. Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Fragmenta in Matthaeum* (in catenis). J. Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* [*Texte und Untersuchungen* 61. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957], 96–135. See also Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies*, 15, 10, in *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, trans. Frederick G. McLeod (London – New York: Routledge, 2009), 168; Alphonse Mingana, *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer*

Theodore also stresses the realism of the identification when he says in his *Catechetical Homilies*:

> Then, when [our Lord] distributed the bread, he did not say that this is a type of my body, but that "This is my body"; and in like manner as regards the chalice [of wine], that this is not a type of my blood, but that "This is my blood." For, when we receive the grace coming from the Holy Spirit, [our Lord] wanted us no longer to regard the nature [of the body and blood] but accept them as the body and blood of our Lord.[108]

Finally, Cyril of Alexandria (376–444), as he reflects on the sacrifice of the Lamb, connects our participation in the Eucharist with the body and blood of Christ who suffered his Passion for us: "The participation of his holy flesh and along with it, the drinking of his saving blood, give us a testimony of the Passion of the death of Christ, which has shown itself to be beneficial for us."[109] The Eucharist is not merely a symbolic celebration, but the real participation in the holy flesh of Christ, an invitation to drink of his saving blood shed for us in his sacrifice, which is renewed at the altar.

Both Eastern and Western authors insist on the awareness of and reverence towards the reality of the very flesh and blood of Christ present through the mystery of the Eucharist. This reverence is manifested in the faithful's acceptance of the transformation of the bread and wine during the Eucharistic sacrifice, and especially in the disposition with which the faithful eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord.

4 THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

An abundance of patristic writings crucial to this investigation can be organized and examined under this fourth theme, that the Eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. The idea of sacrifice is central to the understanding of the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist, and will be one of the most important common elements across the different sources of this survey.[110] It is significant that the majority of

and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 75.

[108] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies*, 15, 3, in McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 167.

[109] Cyril of Alexandria, "Sobre el Éxodo," 2, in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, II:361. MPG 69: 9–677.

[110] For a historical and theological view of the idea of sacrifice, see Robert J. Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press,

patristic texts show that the word sacrifice is used not so much as a reference to the historical sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, but as a direct reference to the Eucharist, which is simply called "the sacrifice."[111]

Western Authors

Western Fathers write about the sacrifice as an action that is offered, an august mystery that unites Christians to the true sacrifice of the Cross. Ambrose of Milan encourages daily reception of the Eucharist, mentioning the great mysteries signified each time the sacrifice is performed: "Then do you hear that, as often as the sacrifice is offered, the death of the Lord, the resurrection of the Lord, the elevation of the Lord, is signified, and the remission of sins, and do you not take this bread of life daily?"[112] Indeed, why would a believer be slow in partaking of this sacrament, if the victory of the Cross signs us as we offer the sacrifice? "We are signed with the sign of His death, we show forth His death when we pray; when we offer the Sacrifice we declare His death, for His death is victory, His death is a sacrament, His death is the yearly recurring solemnity of the world."[113]

The same Bishop of Milan, in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, talks about the presence of an angel as we sacrifice on the altar: "And would that an Angel attend us also as we worship at the Altar, offering sacrifices; indeed, that he shows himself, to be seen. For you may not doubt that an Angel is present when Christ is present, when Christ is

1978) and *Christian Sacrifice: The Judeao-Christian Background before Origen* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1978); A. Gaudel, "Sacrifice," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1939), XIV, I:662–691. See also, on the idea of sacrifice in relation to the Eucharist and the different theories about it, Charles Journet, *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross* (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine´s Press, 2008); M. Lepin, *L´idée du Sacrifice de la Messe d'après des théologiens depuis l'origine jusqu'à nos jours*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1926); Maurice de la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1941); Manuel Alonso, *El Sacrificio Eucarístico de la Última Cena del Señor* (Madrid: BAC, 1929).

[111] This dominant view reaches "an unmistakable high point in Hippolytus." See Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 133. This assessment considers Hippolytus as the author of the so-called "Apostolic Tradition," which, as will be seen in the section on the Roman Canon, is now far from being a clear and unanimous view.

[112] Ambrose, "The Sacraments" 5, 4, in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, 317. CSEL 73. The unity of mysteries around the Eucharist displayed in this text will be explored in Chapter II, §1.2.1.

[113] Ambrose of Milan, "The Two Books on the Decease of His Brother Satyrus," 2, 46, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd ser., X:180–181. [translation modified] CSEL 73.

immolated."[114] Christ's sacrifice is renewed when the Church on earth offers sacrifices, united with the Church of heaven; the angel assists the offering of the sacrifice and brings the consecrated gifts to the altar in heaven.

Augustine is particularly influential for his contribution to the understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice.[115] He indicates that "the sacrifice" of Christ continues in the offering of "the sacrament of the altar": "Such is the sacrifice of Christians: 'We, the many, are one body in Christ.' This is the Sacrifice, as the faithful understand, which the Church continues to celebrate in the sacrament of the altar, in which it is clear to the Church that she herself is offered in the very offering she makes to God."[116] The sacrifice of the Church is the same sacrifice of Christ – the Cross – that is "continued" on the altars. As we offer Christ, we offer ourselves as well. For Augustine saw the Eucharist as a sacrifice due to its relation to the supreme and true sacrifice of Christ on the Cross,[117] and defined it as the visible sacrifice, the sacrament and sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice.[118]

Augustine presents the daily sacrifice of the Eucharist as the sacrament of the mystery of Christ, who is both the Priest and the Oblation: "Thus it is that He is both the Priest who offers and the Oblation that is offered. And it was His will that as a sacrament of this reality there should be the daily sacrifice of the Church, which, being the Body of Him, her Head, learns to offer itself through Him. This is the true sacrifice of which the ancient sacrifices of the saints were but many and manifold symbols."[119]

[114] Ambrose, "On the Gospel of Luke," 1, 28, in *Saint Ambrose of Milan. Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke. With Fragments on the Prophecy of Isaias*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna, Calif.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998), 21 [translation modified]. CCSL 14.

[115] On Augustine's continuity and development of the understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice, see Jackson, "Eucharist," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 331.

[116] Augustine, *The City of God*, X, 6, in *Saint Augustine: The City of God*. Books VIII-XVI, trans. Gerald Walsh and Grace Monahan (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1952) 127. CCSL 47.

[117] See Augustine, *The City of God*, X, 20.

[118] See Augustine, *The City of God*, X, 5. Augustine's influential definition of sacrifice is as follows: "There is, then, a true sacrifice in every work which unites us in a holy communion with God, that is, in every work that is aimed at that final Good in which alone we can be truly blessed. That is why even mercy shown to our fellow men is not a sacrifice unless it is done for God. A sacrifice, even though it is done or offered by man, is something divine – which is what the ancient Latins meant by the word *sacrificium*." Augustine, *The City of God,* X, 6, in *Saint Augustine: The City of God,* 125.

[119] Augustine, *The City of God*, XX, 20, in *Saint Augustine: The City of God*. Books VIII-XVI, 153. CCSL 47.

Again we find the Augustinian synthesis of the idea of sacrifice: in the Eucharistic sacrifice the Church learns to offer herself.[120] Indeed, the Eucharist, as the true sacrifice, fulfills all sacrifices. It is significant that Augustine places the fulfillment of all sacrifices before Christ in the event of his Passion, as the reality fulfills the promise; the Eucharist as the sacrament of memory [*sacramentum memoriae*] celebrates and continues this same reality: "Before the coming of Christ the flesh and blood of this sacrifice was promised by the likenesses of victims; in the Passion of Christ the promise was fulfilled in its reality; after the ascension of Christ it is celebrated through the sacrament in its memory."[121]

Certainly, the word "sacrifice" is rich and encompasses different realities. John Cassian (360–432) shows the different layers of meaning of the word "sacrifice" as he comments on Psalm 141. The true evening sacrifice is at the same time the sacrifice of the Cross, the sacrifice offered at the Supper "when he instituted the most holy mysteries of the Church," and the final sacrifice at the end of the ages:

> "Let my prayer come like incense in your presence, the raising of my hands like an evening sacrifice." Here the true evening sacrifice can be understood in a more spiritual way as either that which the Lord, the Savior, delivered to his apostles as they supped in the evening, when he initiated the sacred mysteries of the Church, or as that evening sacrifice which he offered to the Father on the last day – namely, at the end of the ages – by the raising of his hands for the salvation of the whole world.[122]

The offering initiated on the evening of the Last Supper, and continued in the "the sacred mysteries of the Church" is the true evening sacrifice that fulfills all other sacrifices. All the suffering of previous sacrifices reaches fulfillment in "the mystery of this unique Victim," prefigured in the lamb, as put by Leo the Great: "it is there, in the slaying of a lamb, that the saving sign of the Cross and the Passover of the Lord had first been prefigured."[123] There

[120] Regarding this, see Pier Franco Beatrice, "Christian Worship," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 159.

[121] Augustine, *Against Faustus*, XX, 20, in *Augustine: Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, trans. Roland Teske, SJ (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 2007), 281. CSEL 25. Concerning this, see Gerard Bonner, "The Church and Eucharist in the Theology of St. Augustine," *Sorbornost* 7 (1978), 448–461; reprinted in Gerard Bonner, *God's Decree and Man's Destiny: Studies on the Thought of Augustine of Hippo* (London: Variorum, 1987).

[122] John Cassian, *The Institutes,* III, 3, 9, in *John Cassian: The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: The Newman Press, 2000), 62. CSEL 17.

[123] Leo the Great, "Sermon 33," 4, in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 142. CCSL 138A.

is, indeed, no sacrifice more sacred than Christ's, as Leo indicates in a letter: "Or what sacrifice was ever more holy than that which the true high priest laid on the altar of the Cross through the immolation of his flesh?"[124] The new sacrifice of the new Victim transforms the Cross into "the altar of the world," as Leo powerfully says: "That way, as the mystery of the ancient sacrifices was ceasing, a new victim would be put on a new altar, and the Cross of Christ would be the altar not of the temple but of the world."[125] For Leo, the sacramental life of the Church actualizes the life and deeds of Christ, as he famously said: "What was to be seen of our Redeemer has passed over into the Sacraments."[126] Thus, the sacrifice of the Cross comes to us in the sacrifice of the altar: "This Cross of Christ holds the mystery of its true and prophesied altar ... Who could explain the mystery of such great gift [*muneris*]?"[127] The Cross is the mystery of the gift [*munus*] offered on Calvary and celebrated as a service [*munus*] on the altar. At the Eucharist, we celebrate in mystery what was sacrificed on the Cross.

Gregory the Great expresses the value and fruits of offering the sacrifice:

> He is again immolated for us in the mystery of the holy Sacrifice. Where his Body is eaten, there His Flesh is distributed among the people for their salvation. His Blood no longer stains the hands of the godless, but flows into the hearts of His faithful followers. See, then, how august [is] the Sacrifice that is offered for us, ever reproducing in itself the passion of the only-begotten Son for the remission of our sins.[128]

At the Eucharist, the holy sacrifice, we eat Jesus' body and his blood flows into our hearts. It is, indeed, an august sacrifice, an ever-saving event. The right consequence of participating in it is to try to follow Jesus' example of generosity and thus to sacrifice ourselves: "We need to sacrifice ourselves to God in a sincere immolation of the heart whenever we offer Mass, because we who celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's passion ought to imitate what we are enacting.

[124] Leo the Great, "Letter 124," in *Leo the Great*, trans. Bronwen Neil (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), 108. CCSL 138A.
[125] Leo the Great, "Sermon 59," 5, in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, 257. CCSL 138A.
[126] Leo the Great, "Sermon 74," 2, in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, 326. CCSL 138A.
[127] Leo the Great, "Sermon 55," 44 in *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, 239. CCSL 138A.
[128] Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* [Book 4, Chap. 60], in *Saint Gregory the Great. Dialogues*, trans. Odo John Zimmerman (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 273. SChr 265.

The Sacrifice will truly be offered to God for us when we present ourselves as the victim."[129]

Later, Fulgentius of Ruspe explains how "the sacrifice of bread and wine" fulfills all other sacrifices: "In the time of the New Testament, the sacrifice of bread and wine, in faith and holy charity, the Catholic Church throughout the whole world does not cease to offer to him with the Father and the Holy Spirit, with whom there is one divinity with him."[130] The ancient sacrifices pointed to the reality of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, that proclaims the death of the Lord for us: "In those sacrifices, therefore, was signified in a figure what was to be given to us; but in this sacrifice is clearly shown what has already been given to us. In those sacrifices, it was foretold that the Son of God would be killed for sinners; in this, however, it is proclaimed that he has been killed for sinners."[131] The fruit of communion in this sacrifice, indicates Fulgentius, must be the charity and union of the one body of Christ, gifts for which we should pray at the sacrifice as we commemorate his death, following the example of his own prayer: that we may be one, as he and the Father are one.[132] Thus, the presence of the sacrifice of the Cross in the Eucharist ought to move the believer to follow Christ's example in charity and unity.

Isidore of Seville, in his work of synthesis, answers a simple question: Why is the Eucharistic rite called a sacrifice? He responds in his *Etymologies*: "The sacrifice [*sacrificium*, i.e. of the Mass] is so called as if it were a 'sacred deed' [*sacrum factum*], because by a mystic prayer it is consecrated in commemoration of the Lord's suffering for us, whence we call this sacrifice, at his command, the body and blood of Christ."[133] The mystic prayer of the Church transforms the liturgical rites into a sacred deed: the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross that continues when his body and blood are offered on the altar.

[129] Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, 4, 60, in *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues*, 273. SChr 265. The similarity of these words with one of the prayers of the ordination of priests in the Roman Ritual of 1968 is significant: "Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's Cross." *The Rites of the Catholic Church*. Study Edition (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), II:62

[130] Fulgentius of Ruspe, "To Peter on the Faith," 22, 62, in *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, trans. Robert B. Eno, SS (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 97. CCSL 91A.

[131] Ibid. [132] See Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Contra Fabianum, fragmenta*, 28.

[133] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, VI, 19, 36, in *The Etymologies of St. Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 148.

Eastern Authors

The Eastern Fathers also write abundantly of the Eucharist as a sacrifice that renews the sacrifice of the Cross. In their writings we will find references to the idea of sacrifice as an action that is offered, and as a bloodless and mystical reality that ought to be received with awe and fear.

Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 254/265–339/340) talks about the memorial through which we continually offer a sacrifice, the same Victim immolated for our salvation: "And after all this when He had offered such a wondrous offering and choice victim to the Father, and sacrificed for the salvation of us all, He delivered a memorial to us to offer to God continually as[134] a sacrifice."[135] The memorial is given to us to be offered to God; it is not a self-centered action, but one directed to God. St. Epiphanius (310–403), monk and bishop of Salamis, indicates the necessity of sacrificing to Christ so that through his own sacrifice we might find life in Him,[136] who is "temple, sacrifice, priest, altar, God, man, king, high priest, lamb, sacrificial victim – become all in all for us that life may be ours in every way."[137] St. Ephrem Syrus (306–373) too, as he sings of the greatness of the Cenacle, calls Jesus "true altar, priest, bread and chalice of salvation . . . He himself is the altar and the lamb, the victim and the sacrificer, the priest and the food."[138]

[134] The quoted translation says: "*instead* of a sacrifice." However, the expression *anti* can also be translated as "*as* a sacrifice." Solano follows this translation explaining his reason: "The expression could mean 'as a' sacrifice, which corresponds to our translation, or, perhaps, 'instead of a' sacrifice; however, in this second case it cannot be interpreted as if it denied the reality of this sacrifice, for Eusebius affirms in the many texts we quote, and in this very passage, the truth of the Eucharistic sacrifice; Eusebius means that the Eucharistic sacrifice has now the place and is the continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross." Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:192. If the word translates as "instead" it could also be understood as "instead of a blood sacrifice," still a common religious practice around Eusebius' time.

[135] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Proof of the Gospel* I,10, in www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_de_03_book1.htm. GCS 23.

[136] See Epiphanius of Salamis, "Panarion," 55.8.1, in *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: Selected Passages*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 196.

[137] Epiphanius of Salamis, "Panarion 4, "Against Melchizedekians," 4.1–7, in *Hebrews*, eds. Erik M. Heen and Philip D. W. Krey (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 99. GCS 25, 31, 37.

[138] Ephrem, "Himnos de la crucifixion," 3, 10, in Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:277. SChr 502.

This offering is a bloodless worship, as Cyril of Jerusalem tells his hearers in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*: "after the completion of the spiritual sacrifice, the worship without blood, we call upon God over this sacrifice of propitiation for the peace of all the churches."[139] St. Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 326–390), "the Theologian," writing against Julian the Apostate and the way in which he tried to undo his baptism "washing" himself with blood, also talks about the "bloodless sacrifice" through which we participate in Christ's suffering and divinity: "He unconsecrates his hands by cleansing them from the bloodless sacrifice by means whereof we are made partakers with Christ, both in His sufferings and in His divinity."[140]

St. John Chrysostom, in his explanation of the oneness of the sacrifice of Christ, talks about the sacrifice we offer, which is the remembrance of the one sacrifice of Jesus:

> For we always offer the same, not one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing: so that the sacrifice is one. And yet by this reasoning, since the offering is made in many places, are there many Christs? But Christ is one everywhere, being complete here and complete there also, one Body. As then while offered in many places, He is one body and not many bodies; so also [He is] one sacrifice. He is our High Priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That we offer now also, which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done in remembrance of what was then done. For (says He) *"do this in remembrance of Me."* [Luke 22:19] It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.[141]

The Eucharist appears as an action in which we offer what has been offered; a sacrifice that is one and cannot be exhausted. Mystically, offering the sacrifice of the altar is an action that is performed in remembrance[142] of the sacrifice of the Cross and is thus inserted into the same offering of Christ. Chrysostom places the remembrance of Jesus'

[139] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis*, 5, 8, in *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 183–184. SChr 126.

[140] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Against Julian," 1, 52, in *Julian the Emperor. Containing Gregory Nazianzen's Two Invectives and Libanius' Monody with Julian's Extant Theosophical Works*, trans. C. W. King, MA (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888). MPG 35: 532–664.

[141] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Homily 17, 6, ed. P. Schaff (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 449. MPG 63.

[142] Memorial [*anamnesis*] in general refers to reminiscence and to memorial sacrifice, but it also often means commemoration, as in the Jewish view of the Passover, or in the Christian understanding of the Eucharist, as the recalling and renewal of the saving work of Christ, and not just the memory of a past event. See *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 113; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 113.

sacrifice at the center of the understanding of the Eucharist: "What then? Do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many? Inasmuch as that [sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that."[143] This remembrance must move to compunction, aware that these Eucharistic words are the very last words of the Lord before his death.[144]

The power of the *anamnesis* [remembrance] of the sacrifice of the Cross is effective, and through the liturgical rites, when "all is done with faith," the sacrifice is performed. The Eucharistic Doctor describes in a dramatic way the mysteries at work when "the sacrifice is in hand":

> What do you say? There is the Sacrifice in hand, and all things laid out duly ordered: Angels are there present, Archangels, the Son of God is there: all stand with such awe, and in the general silence those stand by, crying aloud: and do you think that what is done, is done in vain? Then is not the rest also all in vain, both the oblations made for the Church, and those for the priests, and for the whole body? God forbid! But all is done with faith. What do you think of the oblation made for the martyrs, of the calling made in that hour, martyrs though they be, yet even *"for martyrs"*? It is a great honor to be named in the presence of the Lord, when that memorial is celebrating the dread Sacrifice, the unutterable mysteries.[145]

It is worth noting the sense of reverence, respect and awe of this passage. Chrysostom describes the Eucharist as "the dread sacrifice,"[146]

[143] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 17, 6, XIV:449.

[144] See John Chrysostom, "Homily 27," *Homilies on the First Letter to the Corinthians*, in *Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* [Homily XXVII], ed. Philip Schaff (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893), 161.

[145] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, Homily 21, ed. P. Schaff (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 140–141. MPG 60. See also the beautiful words of Narsai about the commemoration of the mysteries of the Church: "On the Mysteries of the Church my thoughts mystically pondered; and I desired to reveal the thought of the heart by the speech of the mouth . . . Into the holy of holies of the glorious Mysteries It permitted me to enter, that I might reveal the beauty of their glory to the sons of the Mystery. Those things which came to pass in the death of the Son she commemorates by the Mysteries." Narsai of Nisibis, "Homily XVII (A)," in *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, 1–2.

[146] Similarly, in his homily on First Corinthians, Chrysostom writes about the "tremendous and awful cup" and of the "awful mysteries." See Homily 24, 3, in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 139. On this topic, see Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 2012), I: 39. The emphasis on awe and fear before the mysteries of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is stressed also by Cyril of Jerusalem and Narsai, among others. Regarding this, see Edmund Bishop, "Observations on the Liturgy of Narsai,"

and, in a similar way, Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria (385–412), talks about the tremendous words pronounced at the liturgy, in which Christ offers a spontaneous sacrifice by his own hands.

> Let us with the utmost zeal put on the wedding garment of unblemished faith. Let us run together to the mystical supper. Christ today is our host at the feast. Christ today waits on us. Christ, the lover of humanity, offers us refreshment. What we are speaking of fills us with awe. What we are celebrating inspires us with fear. The fatted calf is sacrificed. 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' [Jn 1:29] is slaughtered. The Father rejoices. The Son of his own accord is offered as sacrifice not today by the enemies of God but by himself to demonstrate that his saving passion is voluntary.[147]

The Son is offered in sacrifice at the mystical supper, where he is our host, as lover of humanity. This mystery should, indeed, elicit awe and inspire fear. Theodore of Mopsuestia also tries to awaken a reverent awareness of the "awe-inspiring" mystery and its fruits: "As often, therefore, as the service of this awe-inspiring sacrifice is performed, which is clearly the likeness of heavenly things and of which, after it has been perfected, we become worthy to partake through food and drink, as a true participation in future benefits – we must picture in our mind that we are dimly in heaven."[148]

The same Theodore, in his *Commentary on the Eucharist*, makes clear that our service – that is, the liturgy – is a sacrifice:

> We must first of all realize that we perform a sacrifice of which we eat. Although we remember the death of our Lord in food and drink, and although we believe these to be the remembrance of His Passion – because He said: 'This is my body which is broken for you, and this is my blood which is shed for you' – we nevertheless perform, in their service, a sacrifice: and it is the office of the priest of the New Testament to offer this sacrifice, as it is through it that the New Covenant appears to be maintained.[149]

Theodore emphasizes the reality of the sacrifice: not a mere external symbol, but a real sacrifice, which is a remembrance of the "other real

appendix to *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, 92–97. See also Theodore of Mopsuestia and his idea of "the liturgy of this ineffable sacrifice"; "the fearsome liturgy," in Solano, "Homilía 15, primera sobre la misa," *Textos Eucarísticos*, II:93.

[147] Theophilus of Alexandria, "Homily on the Mystical Supper," in *Theophilus of Alexandria*, trans. Norman Russell (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 53. Solano, "Homilía sobre la mística cena," *Textos Eucarísticos*, II:28.

[148] Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Commentary on the Eucharist," 5, in *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, trans. Alphonse Mingana (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 83.

[149] Ibid., 79.

sacrifice": "It is indeed evident that it is a sacrifice, but not a new one and one that [the priest] performs as his, but it is a remembrance of that other real sacrifice [of Christ]."[150] The Eucharist is the "unbloody sacrifice" celebrated in the churches; a true proclamation of Christ's death and Resurrection.[151] This fact that the sacrifice of the Eucharist is the proclamation of Christ´s death is a mystery related to the power of the *anamnesis* of the sacrifice. There is a connection between Christ's death and the bread and the cup: he handed them to his apostles as his Passion was beginning. The saving meaning of Christ's death is expressed in the act of eating the bread and drinking the cup, as the means to participate in the fruits of his death. When Jesus said, *Do this in remembrance of me*, he was indicating the way of transforming the concrete event of his Cross and its anticipation in the Eucharist into a permanently abiding and redeeming event. The Eucharist becomes the presence, both the *solemn proclamation* and the *celebration* – as the verb *katangellō* indicates[152] – of the saving death of Christ among us, just as the Passover was for Israel not only a reminder of a past event, but the way of making that event present and of participating in it.[153]

This new Passover, which actualizes the sacrifice of Christ, is a kind of worship superior to the law, through which we offer the bloodless oblation that sanctifies those who are in Christ, as Cyril of Alexandria wrote:

> He says, *I will no more draw near unto such a pascha as this*, one namely that consisted in the typical eating – for a lamb of the flock was slain to be the type of the true Lamb – *until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God*; that is, until the time has appeared in which the kingdom of heaven is preached. For this is fulfilled in us, who honor the worship that is superior to the law, even the true pascha; nor is it a lamb if the flock which sanctifies those who are in Christ, but Himself rather, being made a holy sacrifice for us, by the offering of bloodless oblations, and the mystical giving of thanks, in which we are blessed and quickened with life. For He

[150] Ibid.

[151] See Cyril of Alexandria, "Letter 17," 12, in *St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 1–50*, trans. John I. McEnerney (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 86.

[152] See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. A translation and adaptation of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*. Fourth revised and augmented edition, trans. and eds. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Cambridge and Chicago: Cambridge University Press and The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 410.

[153] Reflecting on the Christian pasch, Origen said, "The passover still takes place today." Quoted in Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought,* 34.

became for us *the living bread that came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*[154]

The bloodless sacrifice is performed in a manner that symbolically shows the renewal of the offering of Christ, echoing the rituals of ancient sacrifices, as explained by Germanus of Constantinople:

> The Holy Spirit enters ahead with them [the deacons] to the bloodless and spiritual sacrifice, intellectually contemplated in fire and incense and vapor of fragrant smoke. The fire shows divinity, the fragrant smoke shows the presence of the One who has come invisibly and has perfumed us through the mystical and sacrificial and bloodless worship and whole-burnt-offering.[155]

The Eucharist is the sacrifice. It is the action of offering the Victim and a sacred reality, the spiritual oblation that produces reverence and fear. The Eucharist is a sacrifice because of its connection with the sacrifice of the Cross, and it is the *anamnesis*, the constant recalling and renewal of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

5 THE CROSS AT THE EUCHARIST: GESTURE AND OBJECT

The pluriform and rich idea of the Cross as the origin of the Eucharist and the reality of continuation between the two, thereby forming one mystery, one sacrifice that offers the body and blood of Christ on the altar, is expressed in several passages more directly referring to the liturgy of the Eucharist. These show in a more "practical" way the intimate and spontaneous connection made by the early Church between the Eucharist and the Cross. Two realities will frequently appear, in both Western and Eastern authors: the necessity of making the gesture of the Cross over the bread and wine, and the visible and material representation of the Cross as an object at the altar of sacrifice.[156]

[154] Cyril of Alexandria, "Homily 141 on Luke," in *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke by Saint Cyril of Alexandria*, trans. Payne Smith (USA: Studion Publishers, 1983), 566–567. MPG 72: 476–949.

[155] Germanus of Constantinople, "Historia Ecclesiastica," 23–25, in Sheerin, *The Eucharist*, 121. Germanus I, *Historia mystica ecclesiae catholicae* (e cod. Vat. graec. 790 et cod. Neapolit. graec. 63).

[156] The Cross becomes present also in many other ways (e.g. architecture, in devotional practice, in processional crosses, etc). See Robin M. Jensen, *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2017), 1–96. For a general view of the history of the Cross and crucifix, see H. Leclerq, "Croix et Crucifix," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, eds. F. Cabrol and H. Leclerq (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), 3045–3131; Cyril E. Pocknee, *Cross and Crucifix: In Christian Worship and Devotion* (London: Alcuin Club, 1962), esp.

Making the Sign of the Cross

A key ritual practice found in several texts is making the sign of the Cross over the offerings. Ambrose, in his explanation of the nature of the mysteries, writes about the necessity of the Cross. The sign of water is only effective through the Cross: "For water without the preaching of the cross of the Lord is to no advantage for future salvation; but when it has been consecrated by the mystery of the saving cross, then it is ordered for the use of the spiritual laver and the cup of salvation."[157] It is important to highlight the expression "the preaching of the cross of the Lord" [*praedicatione dominicae crucis*] as the action which consecrates the element of water for both Baptism (spiritual laver) and Eucharist (cup of salvation).[158] Ambrose's expression seems to recall the "preaching" of Christ crucified that Paul signals as his mission (*but we preach Christ crucified* – 1Cor 1:23; see also 1Cor 1:17 and 1Cor 2:2). More than a reference to the action of preaching a sermon in the context of a liturgical ceremony, this "preaching" (or proclamation) might be understood as a liturgical action performed upon the sacramental elements.[159] If we go to the original Greek of the Pauline text, we find that the verb *kérussómen* indicates the action of proclaiming through a special commission, of heralding with persuasion the authoritative message of God.[160] The message is Christ crucified: the perfect participle form *estaurōmenos* [crucified] indicates "a past fact that has enduring influence and effects,"[161] that is, the status of Christ as initiated on Calvary.[162] It appears reasonable to consider the possibility of understanding the

36–37; 72–75. For Byzantine processional Crosses see John Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995).

[157] Ambrose, "The Mysteries," 3, 14, in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, 10. CSEL 73.

[158] The practice of mixing water with wine for the consecration of the Eucharist is already attested in the second century by Justin Martyr. See Joseph A. Jungmann, SJ, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, II:38.

[159] Angelo Paredi suggests, in a different approach, that the "proclamation of the Cross" is actually a reference to some praise to the Cross said during the rites of Baptism. See Angelo Paredi, *La Liturgia di Sant'Ambrogio* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1940), 120.

[160] O. Merk, "κῆρυξ, υκο, ὁ," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), II:288.

[161] Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 205.

[162] See Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Letter to the Galatians," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond Brown et al. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), 241.

"proclamation of the cross" upon the water as a priestly action executed through divine commission that actualizes the sacrifice of the Cross and continues its effect through the sacraments.[163] In this sense, Ambrose's words can be read in all their powerful significance: "For what is water without the cross of Christ except a common element without any sacramental effect?"[164]

Augustine too emphasizes the importance of the Cross as the sign of Christ, a sign that gives effective power to the sacramental rites: "What is, as all know, the sign of Christ except the cross of Christ? And unless this sign should be applied either to the foreheads of those believing or to the very water by which they are regenerated, or to the oil with which they are anointed with the chrism, or to the sacrifice with which they are nourished, none of these things is done by the proper rite."[165] Augustine clearly conceives the Cross as more than an external symbol: making the sign of the Cross is part of "the proper rite" that is the condition for communicating sacramental efficacy to objects and people.[166] Rather than being a merely devotional practice, marking with the Cross appears as an effective and necessary action; the Cross is, simply, the sign of Christ, and through it, the sacramental rituals communicate what they signify.[167] Similarly, in the sixth century, St. Gregory, Bishop of Tours (538–594),

[163] The actual celebration of the Eucharist *is* the proclamation of the Lord's death: "*You proclaim* (by celebrating the sacrament rather than with words) *the Lord's death*." *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 410.

[164] Ambrose, "The Mysteries," 4, 20. See also: *De sacramentis* lib.: 2, cap.: 4. CSEL 73. For a recent study on this topic see James Steven, *Ambrose of Milan on Baptism: A Study of De Sacramentis and De Mysteriis* (Norfolk: Alcuin Club, 2017), especially 31–40.

[165] Augustine, "Tract 118," 5, in *Tractates on the Gospel of John 112–24, 43–44*. CCSL 36. The Cross has a central place in Augustine's Christology and sacramental theology. See B. E. Daley, *A Humble Mediator: The Distinctive Elements in Augustine's Christology* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: St. Bede's Publications, 1987), 100–117.

[166] This will be studied in more detail in the next chapter, as we analyze the action of sealing [*sphragis*].

[167] For the concept of *sacramentum* as sacred sign, and a view of the actual liturgical sacraments in the writings of Augustine, see Emmanuel J. Cutrone, "Sacraments," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 741–747; and for the Eucharist as sacrament, see Pamela Jackson, "Eucharist," Ibid., 332–334. On the importance of Augustine for the belief of the necessity of the Cross for the consecration of the sacramental elements, see Frank C. Senn, "Sign of the Cross," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 2008), V:7.

witness to many traditions and customs,[168] describes how "the moment arrived when the holy offering was, following Catholic custom, to be blessed by the sign of the Cross."[169] The "Catholic custom," that is, a solid and ancient tradition, indicates that the blessing comes from the Cross, that the Cross sanctifies and consecrates the Eucharist.

As in the West, in the East the idea of the Eucharist being consecrated by the sign of the Cross appears in several texts. St. Ephrem, as he meditated on the mysteries of Holy Thursday, visualizes Christ himself making the sign of the Cross over the first Eucharistic bread:

> There remained yet another act that would abolish that Passover and would become the Passover of the Gentiles, a source of life until the end. Our Lord Jesus took bread in his hands, plain bread at the beginning, and blessed it, made the sign of the cross over it and sanctified it in the name of the Father and in the name of the Spirit, and he broke and distributed it in morsels to his disciples in his kindness.[170]

Ephrem carefully indicates that the bread is "plain bread at the beginning." Only after the blessing, when it receives the sign of the Cross, does the bread become sanctified and thereupon is distributed. It is, as he wrote, the kindness of the Lord that grants such great gift to his disciples.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, as he describes the Eucharistic rites, explains the central and frequent presence of the Cross in the sacred liturgy:

> With the bread he makes the sign of the cross over the Blood. He does likewise with the Blood over the bread. He joins them, bringing them together so as to show that even if they are two, nonetheless, they are one in power and are the memorial of the passion and death undergone by the Lord's body when he shed his blood upon the cross for us. When the bishop makes the sign of the cross over them, he brings them together, uniting them just as the human body is one with its blood, and where the body is, so there is its blood. This is why the bishop, having finished the anaphora, breaks the bread and joins it to the cup while making the sign of the cross over it. In like manner he also brings the cup to the bread, thus showing that they are one, that we are ordered to commemorate the passion in this way.[171]

[168] See about this Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 81.

[169] Gregory of Tours, *Lives of the Fathers*, 16, 2, in Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, IV:135. MPL 61: 1075.

[170] Ephrem of Syria, "Memra for the Fifth Day of Great Week, Sermon 4," in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 236.

[171] Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Homily 16. On the Eucharist," in Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, III:269.

The Cross is a gesture that commemorates the Passion during the Divine Liturgy and that also brings together the bread and wine, as the body and the blood are united in the crucified Christ. This ubiquitous presence of the Cross is described as well by St. Cyril of Jerusalem as the sign that seals us on every occasion. Although the text goes on to mention several daily activities outside the Eucharistic celebration, it is certainly possible that the reference to the bread and cup is a Eucharistic one:

> So we should not be afraid to acknowledge the Crucified. We should boldly trace the cross with our fingers as a seal on our forehead and over everything: over the bread we eat, the cups we drink, when we come in and when we go out, before we go to sleep, when we go to bed and when we get up, on journeys and at rest. It is a powerful protection; to suit the poor, it costs nothing; to suit the weak, it costs not labour, since it comes as a gift from God; it is a sign for the Faithful and a terror to demons. For "in it he triumphed over them," "openly making an example of them" [Col 2.15 adjusted]. For when they see the cross, they remember the Crucified.[172]

The Cross is traced everywhere and in every moment, as an expression of the courage to acknowledge the Crucified; it is a gift from God that reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Similarly, Narsai (399–502), a prolific Nestorian author and head of the school of Edessa, describes how the Cross becomes present in the manner of receiving the Eucharist, as the hands are placed imitating the shape of a Cross:

> He who approaches to receive the Body stretches forth his hands, lifting up his right hand and placing it over its fellow. In the form of a cross the receiver joins his hands; and thus he receives the Body of our Lord upon a cross. Upon a cross our Lord Jesus was set at naught; and on the same cross He flew and was exalted to the height above. With this type he that receives approaches (and) receives.[173]

The indication to form a Cross with one's hands to receive the Eucharist is noteworthy: as the Lord died on a Cross, so upon a Cross is he to be received at the sacrifice. Cyril of Jerusalem's description of how one was to receive communion, although not explicitly mentioning the Cross, nevertheless has some resemblance to Narsai's instruction: "Make your left hand a throne for your right, which is about to receive the King;

[172] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechesis," 13, 36, in *Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. Edward Yarnold, SJ (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 160–161.

[173] Narsai of Nisibis, "Homily XVII (A). An Exposition of the Mysteries," in *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, 28.

and receive Christ's body in the hollow of your hand, replying 'Amen'."[174]

Finally, the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist is as well a calling to live according to the Cross. St. John Chrysostom, exhorting his hearers to reject what is unworthy of their dignity as Christians, appeals to the Cross and the Eucharist: "Now that among Greeks such things should be done is no wonder: but among the worshippers of the Cross and partakers in unspeakable mysteries, and professors of such high morality that such unseemliness should prevail, this is especially to be deplored again and again."[175] A Christian is sealed by the Cross, partakes in the mysteries of the Eucharist, and must live a good moral life. The sacraments of the Cross mark the whole life of the believer.

The Cross at the Altar

The Cross as a powerful sign is not only a gesture; it also becomes present, in a material way, at the altar where the Sacred Victim is offered. St. Paulinus of Nola writes to Severus about this in relation to the relic of the Cross he sent and the construction of a new church:

> Doubtless the Lord has through your faith granted your heart's desire by enhancing the beauty and holiness of your buildings through your acquisition of sacred ashes from the holy remains of glorious apostles and martyrs. I know that it was in expectation of this favour that you have built our second basilica, bigger than the first, at the village of Primuliacum. Yet I think it worthy of the work of your faith, and of the dedication of that building now faithfully completed (which I am sure huge crowds attend), and also appropriate to the relics of the saints, that you should also venerate that fragment of the cross which I sent, and which lies consecrated in your church in company with the relics of the saints. If you decide to do this, these little verses will announce your decision:
>
> The revered altar conceals a sacred union, for martyrs lie there with the holy cross. The entire martyrdom of the saving Christ is here assembled – cross, body, and blood of the Martyr, God Himself. For God preserves His gifts for you forever, and where Christ is, there also are the Spirit and the Father. Likewise

[174] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Mystagogical Cathechesis 5," 21, in Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 183–186. P. Paris and A. Piedagnel, *Cyrille de Jérusalem. Catéchèses mystagogiques* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966), 82–174. SChr 126.

[175] John Chrysostom, *Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians,* 12, 14, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., XII:71.

where the cross is, there, too, is the Martyr; for the Martyr's cross is the holy reason for the martyrdom of saints.[176]

The altar is the place where the Cross, the body, and the blood of Christ the Martyr, are still given to us, and thus, it becomes as well the place of union between the Holy Martyr of the Cross and the sacrifice of all martyrs. At the altar, the Cross of Christ is physically united to the sacrifice of his saints. That is why "the holy altar conceals a twofold honour to God, for it combines the cross and the ashes of the martyrs. How right it is that the bones of holy men lie with the wood of the cross, so that there is rest on the cross for those who died for it!"[177]

In the same letter, Paulinus reveals an important truth as he considers a rather "practical" problem. He wonders if Severus should keep the relic of the Cross available for "protection and healing"; in other words, if he should place it inside the altar of his new church, since "once it is buried within the altar it may not be always accessible according to the need." Here is his own response: "In that case it would be a sufficient grace for the consecration of the basilica if we entrusted it to the apostles and martyrs."[178] Notably, if the relics of the Cross were, for some reason, not buried within the altar, the relics of martyrs were still placed within it.[179] The idea of sacrifice is absolutely essential to the celebration of the Eucharist, and the Cross is always present, even when its true relics are not.[180]

The visible presence of the Cross as an object will gradually become more evident. Although it is not possible to determine exactly the time when placing a Cross on the altar became a common practice, we do find

[176] Paulinus of Nola, "Letter 32, to Severus," 7, in *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, II: 141–142. CSEL 29.

[177] Paulinus of Nola, "Letter 32, to Severus," 11, 7, Ibid., II:145–146.

[178] Paulinus of Nola, "Letter 32, to Severus," 8, Ibid., II:142.

[179] Ambrose also writes about the placing of the relics of the martyrs beneath the altar, upon which Christ will be present: "Let the triumphant victims take their place where Christ is the victim. Let him be above the altar who suffered for all; let them be beneath the altar who were redeemed by His suffering." Ambrose, "Letter 22 to his Sister," *Saint Ambrose: Letters*, trans. Sister Mary Melchior Beyenka (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1952), 380. CSEL 82.

[180] On Paulinus' important work of church building, and his usage of altars, relics, and the Cross, see Dennis E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999), 242–243. On the association of altars with a martyr's grave or with relics, from the fourth century both in the West and the East, see Heid, "The Early Christian Altar," 104.

some texts from the period of the present study that suggest or indicate the physical presence of the altar Cross.

The Second Synod of Tours (567) offers two remarkable indications of this practice. First, the Synod orders: "the Lord's Body shall be placed on the altar not in a figurative fashion but in the form of a cross."[181] The realistic character of this canon is noteworthy: the Cross in the Eucharist is not only a theoretical idea but becomes the actual practical way of organizing the Eucharistic bread on the altar, as an indication of the intimate connection between these two mysteries. At the sacred liturgy, Cross and Eucharist are one. Second, we find a decree commanding "that the eucharist should not be kept in the *Armarium* [closet], but under the figure of the cross upon the altar."[182] It does seem that this text, probably referring to the reservation of the Sacrament, talks about the practice of placing a Cross upon the Eucharistic altar, which was sanctioned by the Synod in 567 for the French territories.

Later, in Britain, St. Bede tells of an altar Cross that Paulinus of York brought with him in 633 when he was forced to move to Kent: "Paulinus also brought with him much precious treasures belonging to King Edwin, including a great golden cross and a golden chalice, consecrated to the service of the altar."[183] While Bede does not say whether the Cross was placed upon the altar, it is reasonable to assume that it was. The fact that the Cross was "consecrated to the service of the altar" indicates a close

[181] *Synod of Tours II*, Canon 3. 176-L, in Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, IV:157. Under the same principle (Eucharist and Cross are one mystery) we understand the prohibition of offering any other element but bread, wine and water, transmitted in the *Capitula Martini* (after 561): Canon 55. "It is not permitted to offer in the sanctuary anything other than the bread, wine and water, which are blessed as a type of Christ; while he hung upon the Cross blood and water flowed from his body. In Christ Jesus these three are one, this victim and offering to God unto a sweet odor" (Johnson, IV:170).

[182] *Synod of Tours II*, 2,3, in Joseph Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae: Or, The Antiquities of the Christian Church* (London: William Straker, 1834), II:159. See also *Acta Conciliorum et Epistolae Decretales, ac Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum* (Paris: Typographia Regia, 1714), III: 356.

[183] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* II, 20, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 204–205. Around this time we find two other possible notices of an altar Cross: St. Cuthbert (ca. 634–687) mentions a Cross used in his oratory in Lindisfarne; and Aldhelm (ca. 639–709), Bishop of Sherborne, writes about "a Cross at the altar gleaming with plates of gold and silver, and decked with gems." Geo. S. Tyack, *The Cross in Ritual, Architecture and Art* (London: William Andrews & Co., 1900), 68.

relation between the Cross and the altar, and not just the presence of a Cross as an ornament within the church.

In the East as well, some texts suggest the growing presence and centrality of the Cross as an object that is present at the altar of sacrifice. In a text written during his years in Antioch, St. John Chrysostom praises the Cross and its presence in the different aspects of our life: in our houses, market places, roadsides, on ships, on beds, garments, weapons, vases, paintings, on bodies of sick animals and possessed people, etc. And at the core of that thorough description of the ubiquitous presence of the Cross, we find a line of the utmost importance – that will be worth reviewing here in greater detail – in which Chrysostom indicates that a Cross is at the altar: "We see this sign [the Cross] shining forth on the sacred table, at the ordination of priests, and along with the body of Christ at the banquet of the mysteries."[184] Although what the Eucharistic Doctor refers to in saying that the Cross shines on the Sacred Table is not completely clear to us,[185] it does appear to indicate the actual presence of the Cross as a visible

[184] John Chrysostom, "Demonstrations Against the Pagans," 9, in *Saint John Chrysostom. Apologist*, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 227. The commonly accepted *textus receptus* is Migne's: Οὗτος [ὁ σταυρὸς] ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ τραπέζῃ, οὗτος ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἱερέων χειροτονίαις, οὗτος πάλιν μετὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ μυστικὸν δεῖπνον διαλάμπει. *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles, Quod Christus sit Deus* 9. Joannes Chrysostomus. *Opera Omnia*. MPG 48: 826. The first critical edition of the Greek text, based on the different manuscripts is found in Norman McKendrick's unpublished doctoral dissertation on *Quod Christus sit Deus*: Οὕτως ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ τραπέζῃ, οὕτως ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἱερέων χειροτονίαις, οὕτως πάλιν μετὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ μυστικῶν δεῖπνων διαλάμπει. Norman McKendrick, SJ, *"Quod Christus sit Deus"* (New York: Fordham University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1966), 92. A more literal English translation of the text could read as follows: "It (the Cross) shines resplendent on the Sacred Table, in the ordinations of the priests, and again along with the Lord's Body in the mystic Supper." The Latin translation reads: "Hoc in sacra mensa, hoc in sacerdotum ordinationibus, hoc rursum cum corpore Christi in mystica coena refulgent," in Joannes Chrysostomus, *Opera Omnia*. MPG 48 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1862): 826. See also H. Hurter, SJ, *M. Minucii Felicis, Octavius et S. Joannis Chrysostomi, Demonstratio, Quod Christus sit Deus* (London: Libreria Academica Wagneriana, 1901), 148. The Spanish translation says: "(la cruz) brilla en la sagrada mesa, en las ordenaciones sacerdotales, y de nuevo junto con el cuerpo de Cristo en la mística cena." Solano, *Textos Eucarísticos*, I:455.

[185] Hammond, in his reconstruction of the Ancient Antiochene Liturgy, says about this: "The use of the Cross in connection both with the altar and the Holy Bread is clearly indicated, though it is not clear whether the words imply that a representation of the Cross was set up on, or over, the altar, and stamped upon the Bread, or that the sign of the Cross was made by the priest over them." C. E. Hammond, "The Ancient Liturgy of Antioch and other Liturgical Fragments," being an appendix to *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 19. Erik Peterson, in his article on the Cross and the prayer towards the East mentions Chrysostom's text as a reference to the Cross

object on the altar. This Cross "shines forth" [*dialámpei*][186] "on the sacred table" [*èn*[187] *tē hierà trapezē*] and again "along" [*metà*][188] with the Eucharistic body of the Lord. The language used and the context of the writing do not give the impression of this being a reference to a gesture made by the priest, nor to the Eucharistic bread, nor to a Cross in some other place in the church, but to a Cross that adorns the altar.[189] And, inasmuch as this is an apologetic text in which the author is trying to demonstrate Christ's divinity,[190] it seems reasonable to suggest that Chrysostom's words could be describing a tradition that his readers would be able to identify, therefore one that would come from earlier times. For Chrysostom is an exceptionally important witness of theological and liturgical development.[191] If these words were indeed a reference

on the eastern wall of the churches. See Erik Peterson, "La Croce e la Preghiera verso Oriente," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 59 (1945): 59, footnote 14. Bingham thinks that Chrysostom is talking about making the sign of the Cross on the forehead. See Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, II:160.

[186] See *A Greek-English Lexicon*, eds. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 812 and *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 400.

[187] *èn* [ἐν] with dative could be translated as: "in," "on," and "at." See *A Greek-English Lexicon,* 551. The context is decisive for the chosen translation. "On" seems to be the most logical one.

[188] *metà* [μετὰ] with genitive could mean: in the midst of, between, along with, etc. See *A Greek-English Lexicon,* 1108. The Latin *rursum* is interesting, as it could also mean "behind."

[189] This is the unequivocal understanding of the English translator: "The sacred table is the altar in the sanctuary which was adorned with the sign of the cross." *Saint John Chrysostom: Apologist*, 227, footnote 12. The only other possible interpretation of this text appears to be a reference to a relic of the Cross that "shines" (whether spiritually or through a reliquary) on the altar. Although the analysis of the text does not suggest this interpretation, even in this case the Cross would be physically present on the altar.

[190] Concerning the genre and intention of the treatise, see Norman McKendrick, SJ, "*Quod Christus sit Deus,*" 8.

[191] One of the most important aspects of John Chrysostom's heritage is his witness to tradition. Just as Chrysostom is not a particularly independent thinker in his theological work, but rather "an especially reliable witness for the stage of dogmatic development reached at that time," so in his liturgical service, his main task, more than innovation, was that "of making known to his communities the meaning and function of the liturgy and its elements; this he did in preaching that did not lack for originality." R. Kaczynski, "John Chrysostom," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, 334. On the liturgical setting of Chrysostom's life, see, Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 17–25. For a study on Chrysostom's preaching and audience in Antioch, see Jaclyn L. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and His Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65–168. Also, on Chrysostom's work and homilies for getting an image of the Greek liturgy in Syria in

to some kind of altar Cross, then at least since the late fourth century in the influential city of Antioch,[192] we would know of the physical presence of the Cross on the Eucharistic table.[193] Needless to say, this brief and somewhat forgotten text is of the greatest significance in the context of the present study.[194]

We find another significant occurrence in Narsai, who in the *Exposition of the Mysteries*, describes the presence of the "adorable wood" upon the altar:

> All the ecclesiastical body now observes silence, and all set themselves to pray earnestly in their hearts. The priests are still and the deacons stand in silence, the whole people is quiet and still, subdued and calm. The altar stands crowned with beauty and splendor, and upon it are the Gospel of life and the adorable wood [*sc.* the Cross]. The mysteries are set in order, the censers are smoking, the lamps are shining, and the deacons are hovering and brandishing [fans] in likeness of watchers. Deep silence and peaceful calm settles on that place: it is filled and overflows with brightness and splendor, beauty and power.[195]

the fourth century, see Jean-Noël Guinot, *Prédication et Liturgie chez Saint Jean Chrysostome*, in Nicole Bériou and Franco Morenzoni, *Prédication et Liturgie au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 53–77.

[192] It is reasonable to assume a significant influence of Antioch on other cities of the Empire, due to its great importance during the fourth century. For a view on the relevance and complex organization of Antioch during this time, see Liebeschuetz, *Antioch. City and Imperial Administration*. On the theological controversies in Antioch during the time of John Chrysostom, see C. Karalevskij, "Antioche," in *Dictionnaire d'Historie et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, ed. Alfred Baudrillart (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1924), III:572–574. For a study of Antioch during the first three Christian generations, see Raymond E. Brown, SS and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 11–86.

[193] During the invocation, at the beginning of the anaphora, the "Liturgy of Antioch from the Writings of John Chrysostom" indicates that a Cross is set before everyone; preceding and lying at the place where the anaphora is said as the sacrifice is offered. Brightman's edition utilizes Chrysostom's text as a footnote, to illustrate what the Liturgy commands. [See *Liturgies: Eastern and Western*, ed. F. E. Brightman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 474.] The reference is enlightening: the continuity in the liturgical tradition of Chrysostom finds here a transparent expression.

[194] *Quod Christus sit Deus* is a text that has not received enough attention, perhaps because of the doubts about its authenticity expressed by Baur. See Chrysostomus Baur, OSB, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, vol. I, *Antioch* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1959), 337. However, the great majority of studies accept it now without problem as a *bona fide* work of Chrysostom. See Harkins, *Saint John Chrysostom. Apologist,* 165–166. For a discussion on the text and a revision of some of McKendrick's views, see Sébastien Morlet, "La source principale du 'Quod Christus sit Deus' attribué à Jean Chrysostome: la Démonstration évangelique d'Eusèbe de Césarée," in *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques*, 58 (2012): 261–285.

[195] Narsai of Nisibis, "Homily XVII (A). An Exposition of the Mysteries," in *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, 12.

Although it is not entirely clear whether this is a reference to a Cross placed on the altar or to a relic of the true Cross, it is, certainly, an explicit reference to the necessity of the presence of the Cross at the altar of sacrifice. However, considering the language used and the nature of the writing, it is reasonable to consider it probable that Narsai is describing what he physically sees: "the mysteries are set in order." In his description of the altar, which "stands crowned with beauty and splendor," two objects are said to be "upon it": the Gospel of life and the adorable wood. Just as it is not likely that Narsai is describing the spiritual presence of the "word" but rather an actual book, it also seems that the words "the adorable wood" are a reference to an actual Cross upon the altar.[196] In fact, the Syrian tradition, of which Narsai is such a noted representative, is rich in references to the Cross in relation to the Eucharist: there is evidence of Crosses in wall apses, and on the altars of Nestorian convents in the sixth century, and around the seventh century we already know of the existence of the crucifix.[197]

Some other references to an altar Cross are noteworthy, especially as they come from the writings of ecclesiastical historians. In the fifth century, Sozomen, in a chapter dedicated to the temples built by Constantine, writes about a doctor who converted to Christianity and had a vision of "the symbol of the cross, which lay on the altar of this church."[198] And Evagrius Scholasticus, in the sixth century, records the gifts given by Chosroes to Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch, among which he mentions "a cross . . . which should be fixed on the honoured altar."[199] As we have

[196] This is also the opinion of Righetti. See Mario Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica* (Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1950), I:445.

[197] See Peterson, *La Croce e la Preghiera verso Oriente*, 52–57. Christopher Irvine describes other significant Syrian liturgical traditions, such as the early practice of making the altar of wood and calling it "the tree of life," as well as speaking of the Eucharistic gifts as fruits of the Cross. See Christopher Irvine, *The Cross and Creation in Christian Liturgy and Art* (London: SPCK-Alcuin Club, 2013), 147. For a study on Syrian liturgy see Sebastian Brock, *Fire from Heaven: Studies in Syriac Theology and Liturgy* (Hampshire: Ashgate Variorum, 2006). For other studies on early Syrian Christianity, see H. J. W. Drijvers, *East of Antioch: Forces and Structures in the Development of Early Syriac Theology* (London: Variorum, 1984), 1–27.

[198] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 3," in *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, Comprising a History of the Church, from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440* trans. Edward Walford (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), 56. GCS 50.

[199] Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 21, in *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, trans. Michael Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 313.

seen, there is little room for doubt that there were instances of the presence of a Cross on the altar in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

As the texts from this section have shown, the Cross has a central role in the life of Christians. It is the sign that precedes any activity, and the necessary ritual action that offers sacramental efficacy to the offering of the Eucharist.[200] Consequently, it occupies a prominent place in the Eucharistic celebration, both as a gesture and as an object – whether a relic of the *vera crux* [true Cross] or an altar Cross – that reminds believers that the Eucharist and the Cross are integral elements of one and the same mystery.

CONCLUSION

The examination of a wide body of Christian literature from the fourth to the eighth centuries shows that the Eucharist and the Cross were indeed seen as intimately bound together during this foundational period of the Christian faith.

As we saw in our review of the texts, the *idea* of the Cross is expressed in rich themes that show different aspects of the connection between the Cross and the Eucharist. The Cross is, indeed, the origin of the Eucharist, fruit of the new tree of life. Both mysteries are united and the celebration of the Eucharist is the continuation of the offering of the Cross. Therefore, the flesh and blood offered on the Cross are believed to be the same offering believers receive as they celebrate the memorial of the Passion. It is the sacrifice of the Cross that becomes, sacramentally, the sacrifice of the Church: one sole sacrifice, true, complete, spiritual, bloodless, awe-inspiring, and tremendous. In it, Christ is offered again and he himself becomes the altar and the Victim, consecrating the altar of the Cross as the altar of the world. The Cross gives us, therefore, *the* sacrament, the Eucharist, which the Church receives and keeps, being faithful to the mysteries instituted by Jesus.

Along with the importance of the Cross as a theological key for the understanding of the Eucharist, it also became, very early, the *gesture* that sealed the elements used for our sanctification: water, oil, bread, and wine. Viewed thus, the Cross appears as the symbol and carrier of benediction, and, most significantly, it bestows sacramental strength upon the Church's ritual actions. Finally, the Cross also became present as

[200] See V. Grossi, "Cross – Crucifix," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, I:638.

a visible *object* on the altars where the sacrifice of Calvary was renewed, as a powerful symbol of the union between the Cross and the Eucharist.

Certainly, this collection of texts is not exhaustive, and the thematic organization is, to some degree, inevitably arbitrary and open to further refinement. This is one of the disadvantages of studying one topic across a period of time, rather than in the works of one particular author. However, the method chosen here allows us to see the ideas that developed during this decisive period of Christian history, both in the East and the West, expressing, as privileged witnesses, the treasure of tradition: the patrimony of the strong belief that the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Cross renewed and celebrated. In an unsystematic and perhaps intuitive way, numerous authors have shown the strength of this understanding, and the differences between periods and schools are much less than the firm certainty built through the cumulative evidence of so many voices. This certainty will be further expressed in the next chapter, as we move on to read the foundational liturgical sources of the Roman Church, finding similar ideas about the relation between the Cross and the Eucharist, as well as the constant gesture of signing with the Cross, and the progressive growth of the presence of the Cross as an object.

II

The Cross and the Eucharist in Roman Liturgical Sources

In the previous chapter we examined a wide sample of early Christian texts in which, from the fourth century to the end of the patristic era, Eastern and Western authors developed important themes on the Cross and the Eucharist. From those theological foundations we move now to the study of liturgical documents of the Roman Church: the early Roman sacramentaries, the Roman Canon, and the *Ordines Romani* [Roman Orders]. From this point on the scope of the research will focus on the Roman liturgy, on its understanding and practice. This affords us the possibility of studying the period of transition between antiquity and the Middle Ages, a time that witnessed the production of these first liturgical books of the Western Church; a time in which the development of the dogmas of faith also reached a point of maturity.

As in the previous chapter, the Cross will appear in different theological themes present in the liturgical documents of this section as a central idea for Eucharistic theology and practice. The Cross will be also seen as a rich and frequent gesture performed in the sacred liturgy, and likewise as an object of liturgical devotion. Bringing the voice of liturgical sources into conversation with the patristic sources already reviewed will offer a distinct perspective that will allow an attentive examination of fundamental witnesses of Eucharistic theology and practice of a period that brought decisive developments to the liturgical life of the Church.

1 THE EARLY ROMAN SACRAMENTARIES

History and Text

What do we mean when we use these words: "Roman" and "sacramentary"?[1] Why are those texts relevant and how were they produced? Fernand Cabrol describes the sacramentary in the following way: "Of all the books used at the Mass the most precious is the *sacramentary*, because it is the one used by the priest, in which he finds all the parts of the Mass he has to recite: collect, preface, secret, canon, post-communion."[2] As "the book of the ministerial interventions," from the point view of the *actors*, it is distinguished from the books of lectors and of cantors. From the point of view of the *actions executed*, it is presented as the book of the words and gestures performed by the ministers.[3]

This precious book came into being after a long process. In the first centuries of the Christian faith, improvisation was the common practice in liturgical celebrations. However, "the freedom to improvise existed only within a framework of fixed elements of content and style, which was, above all, biblically inspired."[4] Towards the second half of the fourth century we can find, in the Roman Church, the core of a non-variable theme upon which improvisation was exercised, thus offering the opportunity for adaptation according to different places and days. Soon, the Eucharistic prayer would find a more defined framework and more precise formulas, but the specific character of each Mass would still depend greatly on the improvisation of the celebrant.[5]

Evidently, the freedom given to the celebrant would not always yield good fruits, not only because of the difficulty of improvising fine prayer-formulas at each Mass, but also because of doctrinal problems: "orthodoxy was defined through liturgical texts, especially orations."[6] In this context, at the turn from the fourth to the fifth centuries, under the

[1] Because the Roman sacramentaries and *ordines* studied in this chapter are, generally, less known than the patristic authors previously seen, it will be pertinent first to explain their nature and history as key sources of liturgical development.

[2] Abbot Cabrol, OSB, *The Books of the Latin Liturgy* (London: Sands & Co., 1932), 31.

[3] See Marcel Metzger, *Les sacramentaires* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), 33.

[4] Uwe Michael Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer: Reflections on Liturgy and Language* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 51.

[5] See Jean Deshusses, OSB, "The Sacramentaries: A Progress Report," in *Liturgy*, no. 1 (1984): 23.

[6] Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 36.

influence of an increasing regulation of North African councils, a shift occurred towards the primacy of a written text for the celebration of the Eucharist.[7] Some ecclesiastical authorities – Augustine among them – decided to gather prayers from the living tradition in order to provide texts for the Mass that were both well-written and of sound doctrine.[8]

Some other factors greatly influenced the transition from free improvisation to written formulas. First, the codex replaced the scroll, a development that fostered the appearance of "books" and had a profound cultural impact. The second factor was a trend towards the codification of usages, traditions and knowledge that emerged in the fifth and sixth centuries.[9] Finally, the period of liturgical restoration of Rome after the invasions offered the opportunity for the work of fixation and collection of ancient traditions.[10]

Prior to the sacramentaries we find the *libelli missarum*, which are small booklets or even single pages containing certain formulas for one or more Masses, mainly, the presidential prayers, the preface, and introductions to the *Hanc igitur* ["Therefore Lord, we pray"] of the Roman Canon. They were usually composed for particular occasions and/or locations. These texts have great importance in the history of the liturgy, as they can be considered "the missing links" between the period of improvised prayers and their collection into a sacramentary properly intended for liturgical use.[11] It is from these works of compilation that the sacramentary came into existence in the sixth and seventh centuries, as the book for use of the principal celebrant.[12]

These early sacramentaries are composite books, containing the rich treasure of several ancient texts, such as different groups of Sunday and votive Masses, blessings and other prayers, being each one a complete formulary for the respective celebration.[13] They are "Roman," because they were produced and developed at Rome or in dependence on Rome.[14]

[7] See M. Klöckener, "Sacramentary," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, eds. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings (New York: Herder, 2000), 519.

[8] See Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 36. [9] Ibid., 37.

[10] For a review of the historical context during the time of composition of the Roman sacramentaries, see Metzger, *Les sacramentaires*, 29–32.

[11] See Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (Portland, Ore.: Pastoral Press, 1986), 38.

[12] See Klöckener, "Sacramentary," 519.

[13] See Cabrol, *The Books of the Latin Liturgy*, 32.

[14] See Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 20. On the Roman character of these sacramentaries, see also Antoine Chavasse, *La Liturgie de la Ville de Rome du V au VIII siècle* (Roma: Centro Studi S. Anselmo, 1993), 164.

The emergence of these books in Rome happened because of the literary freedom of the time and the talent of Roman liturgists and priests to adapt the material to local usage. These texts, which matured as re-workings and compilations of the originals, have a concrete character that reflects the practice of the Roman Church, and soon became decisively influential in many other territories because of the several requests for them from outside Rome. Undoubtedly, the high quality of these texts found support in the prestige of the Roman see, and other liturgical documents from outside Rome are only of small importance.[15]

Rome had three sacramentaries. For some time, "a flagrant anachronism led scholars to see in these three texts three successive stages of the Roman liturgy, and because of their major differences, to date these books back to three separate and successive periods: hence the epithet they received, *Leonine, Gelasian, Gregorian.*"[16] We will now review briefly the main characteristics of each sacramentary.

The Leonine Sacramentary

The term "Leonine sacramentary" is improper not only because Pope Leo I was neither the author of the book nor even responsible for its constitutive parts,[17] but also because it is not a sacramentary in the strict sense. This collection could be called a "pre-sacramentary"[18] or "the earliest predecessor"[19] of the sacramentaries. It is a collection of *libelli missarum* made in the second half of the sixth century, although the formulas themselves go back to the fifth century.[20]

The Leonine is a Roman book in the strict sense.[21] Duchesne writes about this:

[15] See Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 20.

[16] Ibid. On the development of the Roman Missal in the period that follows the time frame of this research, see Paul Gunter, OSB, "*Sacerdos paratus* and *populo congregato*: The Historical Development of the Roman Missal," in *Benedict XVI and the Roman Missal: Proceedings of the Fourth Fota International Liturgical Conference, 2011*, eds. Janet E. Rutherford and James O. Brien (Dublin and New York: Four Court Press and Scepter Publishers, 2013), 42–69.

[17] For references to the attempts of some scholars to identify the parallels and connections between the Leonine and some works by Pope Leo (Frank Leslie Cross and Arthur Paul Lang), or with some Masses by Popes Gelasius (Bernard Capelle and Antoine Chavasse) and Pope Vigilius (Chavasse), see Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer*, 96; see also Metzger, *Les sacramentaires*, 50–53.

[18] Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 38. [19] Klöckener, "Sacramentary," 519. [20] Ibid.

[21] See Mario Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica* (Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1950), I:227.

It must be a purely Roman book, not only because of the absence of any traces of Gallican elements in it, or because in the State prayers it always makes mention of the Roman Empire with peculiar loyalty, but because it exhibits on every page those topographical touches which enable us to distinguish between a text drawn up for the Church of Rome locally, and one which is merely in conformity with the Roman use.[22]

It was kept in the Lateran archives, from where the collection seems to come, and in its nature it is an adaptation of the Papal liturgy for presbyteral use. It is a private collection and not an official liturgical book for the actual use of celebrants at Mass;[23] it is rather "a sort of dossier"[24] composed of prayers that "take us back to the earliest prayer forms of the Roman liturgy: *preces* (consecratory formulas), *oratio fidelium* (intercessory prayer) and *orationes* (brief prayers after the chants or readings and at the conclusion of morning and evening prayer)."[25]

Although the Leonine has no direct "descendants," it certainly occupies a very important place in the history of the Roman liturgy, as its contents are, directly or indirectly, the source of the Roman sacramentaries, as well as other books used at Milan and in Frankish territories.[26] Furthermore, its importance derives from two other facts: it provides key information about the history of the city of Rome[27] and its liturgical practices, and it is "the only material witness we have of the passage from liturgical improvisation to codification through books."[28]

The Gelasian Sacramentary

Although Pope Gelasius (+496) is, according to several scholars, the origin of certain pieces of the sacramentary that bears his name,[29] he should not be considered the author of the book, as was previously believed based on a statement found in the *Liber Pontificalis*: "he [Gelasius] composed a sacramentary with carefully worded prefaces and orations."[30]

[22] Mgr. L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution. A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1903), 139.

[23] On this, see C. Mohlberg, OSB, "Nuove Considerazioni sul cosi detto 'Sacramentarium Leoninaum'," in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 47 (1933): 4–12.

[24] Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 26.

[25] Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 43. About other specific aspects of the text of the Leonine (such as marginal annotations, the distribution of its material and the sanctoral it contains), see Chavasse, *La Liturgie de la Ville de Rome*, 69–86.

[26] Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 26.

[27] See Chavasse, *La Liturgie de la Ville de Rome*, 69.

[28] Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 41.

[29] See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 68.

[30] See Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 44.

The Gelasian sacramentary[31] has an "exceptional importance" for historians of institutions, historians of the liturgy and for theologians, because it is the first proper liturgical book of the Roman church.[32] Based on the analysis of its contents it is possible to ascertain that it was composed in the seventh century,[33] its material having been taken from *libelli* used in Rome in that time.[34]

This sacramentary has 1704 pieces and shows two distinctive marks. First, it is clearly divided into three books: Book I, containing the Temporal cycle; Book II, the feasts of the saints according to the Roman calendar; and Book III, Sundays, the Canon and other celebrations not included in the calendar.[35] Second, the typical formulary for each Mass set is comprised by two prayers that resemble our current collects;[36] the secret (prayer over the offerings); a proper preface; a post-communion; and a prayer over the people.[37]

The Gelasian is a presbyteral sacramentary composed for the liturgical use of the Roman titular churches, containing all the prayers needed by a priest in charge of a *titulus* (one of the older churches of Rome).[38] It is a Roman book that we only possess in a Frankish recension, thus bearing certain Gallican additions.[39]

The importance of the Gelasian sacramentary can be summarized in two main points. First, it was the first agent of the Romanization of the Frankish liturgy, and, after it arrived in Gaul, it became the agent of a certain gallicanization of the Roman liturgy.[40] Second, it offers crucial information on the way in which presbyteral liturgy was celebrated in the

[31] As this second part of our study focuses on the presence of the Cross in the Roman liturgical books, we will only study the *Gelasianum vetus*, excluding other eighth-century Gelasian-Frankish sacramentaries. For a review of the manuscripts of the eighth-century Gelasians, see Bernard Moreton, *The Eighth-Century Gelasian Sacramentary: A Study in Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 176–205.

[32] See Antoine Chavasse, *Le Sacramentaire Gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316): Sacramentaire Presbytéral en Usage dans les Titres Romains au VIIe Siècle* (Tournai: Descleé, 1957), v; Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, I:231.

[33] See Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 44.

[34] See Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution,* 128. See also Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 68.

[35] See Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 31.

[36] Perhaps the second one was used for the conclusion of the general intercessions, or as an alternative for the celebrant's choice.

[37] Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 45. [38] See Klöckener, "Sacramentary," 520.

[39] For a list of the Frankish additions, see Metzger, *Les sacramentaires*, 102–104, and Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 66–67.

[40] Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 45–46.

diocese of Rome in the seventh and eighth centuries, during the same time when the Gregorian sacramentary provides a portrait of another kind of Roman liturgy.[41]

The Gregorian Sacramentary

Although the attribution of the Gregorian sacramentary to Gregory the Great has more solid traditions than that of the Gelasian to Pope Gelasius,[42] and certain pieces very probably come from his own hand,[43] it is, however, clear that Pope Gregory is not the author of the sacramentary as a whole, as its title might indicate. Two of the characteristics of this book challenge Gregory's authorship. First, the composition's clumsiness and inconsistency could hardly have come from the mind of a man of Gregory's stature.[44] Second, it contains certain feasts and Masses that could have not been included by the great pope, such as certain festivals of the Blessed Virgin, the Thursdays of Lent, and the feast of Pope Gregory himself.[45]

Unlike the other sacramentaries previously studied, there are innumerable manuscripts of the Gregorian.[46] Two distinctive characteristics of this book are its organization according to the liturgical year, combining thus the sanctoral and the temporal without a division into books, as is the case in the Gelasian; and a three-prayer scheme for each Mass set, using different terms than the Gelasian to designate each of these prayers: *oratio* [oration], *super oblata* [over the offerings], *ad complendum* [at completion].[47]

This sacramentary was probably composed during the pontificate of Pope Honorius I (625–638) as a collection of *libelli missarum* of the Lateran, becoming a Papal book for liturgical celebrations at the Lateran basilica and at the stational liturgies around the city of Rome.[48]

[41] Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 70.

[42] Cassian Folsom, comparing the Gregorian to a tree, says that we can find in Gregory the roots of the trunk, which developed into several branches. See Cassian Folsom, OSB, "The Liturgical Books of the Roman Rite," in *Introduction to the Liturgy*, vol. I of *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungo (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 252.

[43] Probably 10 percent of the material, according to Dom Henry Ashworth. See Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 35. See also, on Ashworth's attempt to identify Gregory's direct authorship of some collects, Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer*, 96–97.

[44] See Deshusses, "The Sacramentaries," 34.

[45] Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 124.

[46] For a classification of the different manuscripts available, see Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, I:237. See also Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, 62–76.

[47] See Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 50–51.

[48] See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 79.

Later, in the second half of the seventh century, it was gradually augmented with new celebrations and stational Masses, and it developed into different types of sacramentaries, as witnessed by several manuscripts.[49] Later, around the ninth century, the Gregorian would mingle with the Gelasian and become the dominant type of sacramentary.[50]

Themes of the Cross and the Eucharist in the Early Roman Sacramentaries

The three early Roman sacramentaries[51] are, as we have seen, witnesses of the utmost importance in our effort to get a picture of the emphases and practices of the liturgical life in Rome towards the end of the patristic era.[52]

In this section we will follow a method similar to that in Chapter I. We will first review the material – the three sacramentaries – and then proceed to organize the texts thematically, trying to present certain

[49] On the different manuscripts, see *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien*, I:34–47. There are four kinds of Gregorian: 1. The *Hadrianum*: the papal liturgical book sent by Pope Hadrian I to Aachen, at the request of Charlemagne (784/791). This is the so-called Gregorian Type I. 2. The *Hadrianum* and its Supplement: the *Hadrianum*, corrected and supplemented by Benedict of Aniane (810/815), more than doubling its size. This Roman-Frankish liturgy became the most prevalent liturgy of the Latin Church. Its preface (*Hucusque*) is of great importance. This book is also known as the *Supplementum Anianense*. 3. The *Paduense*: the papal sacramentary adapted for presbyteral use at Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, around 670–680. This is the Gregorian Type II. 4. The *Tridentinum*: a Type I Gregorian, perhaps even pre-Hadrianum, but supplemented with more material, from the period of the pontificate of Pope Sergius I (687–701). See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 80–102; Klöckener, "Sacramentary," 520.

[50] Klöckener, "Sacramentary," 520. On the acceptance of the Roman elements of the sacramentaries and the subsequent influence of French and German practice into Italy that characterizes the final stage of development of late antiquity into Medieval times, see Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, 2nd ed. (London and Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 106.

[51] We will use the term "Roman sacramentary" to describe the three books studied in this section: the Leonine, the Gelasian, and the Gregorian. We will include texts of the Paduense (Pad D47), as a witness of an ancient kind of the Gregorian: although the manuscript Pad D47 is from the ninth century, it is a faithful witness of a Type II Gregorian. The Tridentinum is not included in this survey, as its text was revised in 795–815 and is heavily contaminated by the Anianense. See Jean Deshusses, *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien: Ses Principales Formes d'après les Plus Anciens Manuscrits*, I, 57, 71–72.

[52] For an index of collects and prefaces of the three Roman sacramentaries, see H. A. Wilson, *A Classified Index to the Leonine, Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, According to the Text of Muratori's Liturgia Romana Vetus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892).

important keys for an understanding of the way in which the Roman liturgy related the mystery of the Cross and the mystery of the Eucharist. The first themes will show aspects of the Cross as a theological idea and hermeneutical key for the understanding of the Eucharist, and the last theme will show the richness of the gesture of sealing with the Cross.[53]

Unity of Mysteries

One of the most significant ideas that appears when we read the references to the Cross in the early Roman sacramentaries is what we can call the "unity of mysteries." We see a fluidity and cohesion in the way in which the ancient prayers relate the different mysteries of our faith to each other, in a manner that might seem surprising to a modern mind, more accustomed to precise distinctions.

A very well-known prayer, found as a post-communion prayer according to the Gregorian sacramentary for the celebration of the Annunciation, and commonly used today at the conclusion of the *Angelus* prayer, illustrates this point: "Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection."[54] Notably, the remembrance of the Annunciation of the angel about the Incarnation of Christ does not appear as a static event from the past, but, with the aid of the Lord's grace, as the occasion to be brought to the glory of the Resurrection by the merits of Jesus' Passion and Cross. Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection are three movements of the one mystery of our salvation in Christ. In this same sense, the title of the feast of the Annunciation in the Paduense is noteworthy: *Adnuntiatio Sanctae Dei Genitricis et Passio eiusdem Domini* [Annunciation of the Holy Mother of

[53] In this section we will include euchological texts from the liturgies of the Eucharist and other celebrations, insofar as the latter were attached in the Roman sacramentaries to the Eucharistic liturgy. On this, see Metzger, *Les sacramentaires*, 33.

[54] *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien*, formula 143. Henceforth, we will use a simplified way to note references to the sacramentaries, mentioning only the title of the book (Leonine, Gelasian, Gregorian) and the number of the formula. In this case: Gregorian, 143. This same prayer is the collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent in the Roman Missal of Paul VI. *Missale Romanum*, Editio Typica Tertia (Vatican: Typis Vaticanis, 2002), 141. The English text of the prayers of the three sacramentaries, there being no extant English translation of these books, is provided based on the translation done for this work by Professor Fred Fraser of Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, Merrimack, New Hampshire, USA. Whenever available, the English text is taken from the third edition of the Roman Missal (1970/2011).

God and Passion of the Lord]. Thus, the Church asks God to accept the oblation offered in honor of the Incarnation and Passion of the Redeemer.[55] This is related to the idea, expressed in an ancient Christian calendar, that March 25 was not only the day on which Christ was conceived but also the day on which the world was created, and on which the Lord died.[56]

Similarly, one of the prayers for the solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord asserts that our redemption is obtained not only by the birth of the Lord but also by his Cross: "God, who have fully offered the effect of the redemption to your people so that they may be saved not only by the corporeal nativity of your Only Begotten One, but also by the scaffold of his Cross: grant to your servants, we pray, that by the strength of this faith, they may arrive at the promised reward of glory since you yourself are also their guide."[57] The explicit mention of the Cross in the context of Christmas is noteworthy and does not appear as "inopportune": the mystery of Christ's salvation is one, and is accomplished in several "acts." Likewise, a Palm Sunday collect asks God to help us merit a share in the Resurrection of Christ, who assumed our flesh and embraced the Cross: "God, whose work it was that our Savior took on flesh and endured the Cross as an example of humility to be imitated by the human race, kindly grant that we may deserve to hold to the example of his patience and share in the fellowship of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ."[58] The preface on Easter Sunday does not fail to remember the Cross, recalling its memory with a victorious sentiment:

> Because the death of all of us has been redeemed by the Cross of Christ and the life of all of us has risen in his Resurrection. He whom we recognize to be the God of majesty in his acceptance of mortality, and whom we confess to be God and man in

[55] *Die Älteste Erreichbare Gestalt des Liber Sacramentorum Anni Circuli der Römischen Kirche*, Cod. Pad. D 47, fol. 11r–100r, eds. Kunibert Mohlberg, Odilio Heiming and Anton Baumstark (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagbuschhandlung, 1969), formula: 386. Henceforth: Paduense.

[56] See Dom Fernand Cabrol, OSB, *The Prayer of the Early Christians* (London: Burnes Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1930). That Christ suffered his Passion on this day was believed by Tertullian and Augustine, among others. See Ralph Martin Novak, *Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 308.

[57] *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli* [Sacramentarium Gelasianum sec. cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 316], ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, OSB (Roma: Casa Editrice Herder, 1981), formula: 26. Henceforth: Gelasian.

[58] Gelasian, 329. See the same prayer in Gregorian, 312.

the glory of his divinity. He who destroyed our death by dying and restored our life by rising, is Jesus Christ our Lord.[59]

In an Easter evening prayer the celebrant asks that those who have been washed by Christ be protected, so that they who are redeemed by his Passion, may rejoice in his Resurrection.[60] And, on the second Sunday after Easter, the preface recalls the Nativity, the Passion, and the Resurrection of Christ: "For out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours, he humbled himself and was born of the Virgin; by the Passion of the Cross he freed us from unending death, and by rising from the dead he gave us life eternal."[61]

The mystery of creation is also related to the mystery of redemption. God, as Creator, is called Founder,[62] Keeper,[63] Ruler,[64] but also, in the context of the Nativity, Restorer [*reformator*]:[65] the Creator is at the same time the Redeemer of mankind through his glorious Passion.[66] The Holy Spirit was present in the creation of the world and also in its salvation.[67] Indeed, in the love of God, "redemption and creation are mingled."[68] Creation and Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection are "manifold aspects of the one saving mystery."[69]

This unity of the different mysteries of our faith is a hallmark of the early piety of the Church and expresses what Anton Baumstark called "the great Idea, which holds in union the remembrance both of the Death and Resurrection of Christ."[70] Along these same lines, Josef Andreas Jungmann writes about Pope Leo the Great's preaching on the Passion of Christ on Palm Sunday, on Wednesday, on Good Friday, and also on Easter Sunday, when – he posits – probably the Gospel narrative of the Passion was read again.[71] Jungmann describes the union of the mysteries

[59] Gelasian, 466. [60] Gelasian, 532.

[61] Gelasian, 549. See also Paduense, 362. This English version is taken from the Roman Missal of 1975/2011, where this text is the second preface for Sundays in Ordinary Time.

[62] Gelasian, 1619. [63] Gelasian, 691. [64] Gelasian, 775. See also, Gelasian, 975.

[65] Gelasian, 28. [66] Gelasian, 804. [67] Gelasian, 619.

[68] Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 144.

[69] Ibid., 230.

[70] Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1958), 173.

[71] It seems that Jungmann is referring here to Pope Leo's Sermon 69, 1–2, preached on April 4, 454 at the Holy Saturday Vigil. On that occasion Leo says that due to "the greatness of this ineffable mystery … it would not be superfluous for us to preach something we have preached before" later to affirm, "Know, dearly beloved, that in going over this text of the Gospel reading – to which you paid close attention, the one dealing with the glory of Christ's Cross – all the mysteries of these divine utterances have

of Cross and Resurrection[72] in the celebration of Holy Week in these words:

> Already on Palm Sunday we beg of the Lord in view of the cross: *ut et patientiae ipsius habere documenta et resurrectionis consortia mereamur* [that we may improve by the example of his patience and merit to take part in his resurrection]. And even on Good Friday, at the adoration of the Holy Cross, the hymns speak of the *sancta resurrectio* [holy resurrection]; while on Easter Sunday our attention is turned in the preface first to the cross and only then to the Resurrection: *qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit, et vitam resurgendo reparavit* [who dying destroyed our death, and rising restored our life].[73]

It is in the context of the mysteries of Holy Week that John the Apostle and Evangelist is called the "Vicar of the Lord," as the one who, having reclined his head on the Savior's chest during the mystical supper, was also chosen to represent Jesus by receiving the Virgin Mother into his life.[74] The Cross and the Eucharist are united in the celebration of the Paschal mystery, in which the Mother of the Lord is welcomed and at the same time guards us as she guarded her Son.

The Response to the Gift of the Cross

Another theme that appears as we read the texts on the Cross and the Eucharist in the Roman sacramentaries is the dynamic of gift and response, of grace and nature, of God's gratuitousness and man's cooperation. This theme is found not only in the contents of the prayers but in their very structure, particularly in the case of the collects. These variable

been disclosed to you." *St. Leo the Great. Sermons*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 300–301. CCSL 138A.

[72] Would it be possible to suggest that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is also a precious witness of this unity, containing in one building the shrines of Calvary and the Resurrection? About the building of the Holy Sepulcher, see Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: From the Beginning to 1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16–79. Similarly, in relation to Syriac liturgy and theology, see Gerard Rouwhorst, "The Liturgical Background of the Crucifixion and Resurrection Scene of the Syriac Gospel Codex of Rabbula: An Example of the Relatedness between Liturgy and Iconography," in *Studies on the Liturgies of the Christian East: Selected Papers of the Third International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy,* eds. Steven Hawkes-Teeples, Bert Groen and Stefanos Alexopulos (Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013), 230–234.

[73] Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 261.

[74] *Sacramentarium Veronense* (Cod. Bibl. Capit. Veron. LXXXV[80]), ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, OSB (Roma: Casa Editrice Herder, 1966), formula 1276. Henceforth: Leoninan. A similar preface is found in Paduense, 34.

prayers,[75] composed as one sentence, have three parts: the address, the petition, and the conclusion. As will be seen in the following examples, the petition, which expresses the goal and purpose of the prayer, frequently contains the expectation that, from the celebration of the mysteries, some fruits obtained by effort and cooperation will come to the life of the faithful. The Roman collects usually show a structure based on the recognition of God's blessings and the petition of a gift that invites a response.

During the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday the priest says in the collect, according to the Gelasian: "O God, from whom both Judas received the punishment of his sin, and the thief the reward of his confession: grant us the effects of thy mercy; that as our Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of his Passion, bestowed on both different rewards according to their merits: so having destroyed the old man within us, he may give us grace to rise again with him."[76] The tone and approach of this collect is sober and objective. It implies an acknowledgment of the situation in which we live: the old error of sin and its effects. The Cross is the answer to that situation; but the mystery of the Cross respects and involves our freedom. The collect clearly states that our recompense will correspond to our merits. The examples of Judas and the good thief illustrate the dynamics of our redemption, in which freedom is crucial. The Cross is our hope, but it cannot save us if we do not cooperate. Although the collect does not mention the Cross, it recalls its cause – the old error of sin – and its fruit – our participation in Christ's Resurrection – thus showing the new reality of God's justice.

The Gelasian offers the following prayer to be said after the Gospel:

> God, who freed us from the hereditary death of the old sin, with which every race of posterity entered the world, by the passion of our Lord, your Christ, grant that, after having become like Him, we may bear the image of heavenly grace by the sanctification from Christ our Lord just as we have carried the image of our earthly nature by necessity.[77]

This prayer has, in its very center, the explicit mention of the Passion of Christ, as the core that connects the first idea mentioned – death as our inheritance from sin – with the last idea of the prayer: our putting on the

[75] See a summary of Mary Gonzaga Haessly's work and other studies on the Roman collects in Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer*, 89–94.

[76] Gelasian, 396. The English translation is taken from Dom Prosper Guéranger, OSB, *The Liturgical Year: Passiontide and Holy Week* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2000), VI:467.

[77] Gelasian, 398. The English version is taken from the second option for the Collect for the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, according to the 1975/2011 Roman Missal.

image of Christ. As in the previous collect, the idea of responding to the work of redemption is clear: we pray that God will give us the grace of conforming ourselves with his Son. In this prayer we can see the Pauline concept of the image of the old man – Adam – and of the new and celestial image of man (cf. Eph 4:22–24), as well as the contrast between the necessary situation of our fallen nature and the new reality of our nature redeemed by grace.

Following the same logic, the collect for September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross) in the Gelasian asks that the joy of celebrating the feast of the Cross help us to obtain the rewards of Christ's redemption: "God, you who give us joy today at the Exaltation of the Holy Cross with this annual solemnity, grant that, just as we acknowledge its mystery on earth, we may attain the rewards of his redemption."[78] Clearly, the understanding of the liturgical celebration of the Cross is not just about what is felt or experienced, but also about the fruits of those celebrations in our life and, therefore, about our own merits and cooperation with God's gifts. On the same feast, the Gregorian contains a prayer that explicitly expresses the intimate union between the celebration of the Cross and our salvation, between adoration and its effects: "After having been nourished by the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the sign of the Cross has been sanctified, we beseech you, Lord, our God, that, just as we have merited to adore you, we may likewise take possession of the effect of his perennial, salvific glory."[79] The Leonine transmits the following prayer in which we also see the connection between the devotion of the celebrations and the actual salvation we aim to receive through the Eucharist: "We, who have been renewed by the offering of the sacred body and precious blood, beg for your mercy, Lord, so that we may receive in sure salvation that which we perform with frequent devotion."[80] Performing the mysteries with devotion leads to receiving their graces and working to attain our salvation.

Many other texts show this intimate and constant connection between the grace of the mysteries and cooperation with the work of salvation. Thus, participation in the celestial mysteries brings defense from the enemy,[81] arming us against both our own error and the attacks of the devil,[82] cleansing us from our iniquities,[83] and purifying our hearts[84] and

[78] Gelasian, 1023. See the petition made on Palm Sunday, that we may deserve to follow the example of humility and patience of Jesus on the Cross, in Gelasian, 329 and Gregorian, 312, quoted in the previous section.
[79] Gregorian, 691. [80] Leonine, 69. [81] Leonine, 214. [82] Gelasian, 56.
[83] Gregorian, 469. [84] Leonine, 127.

minds[85] from the practice of vices,[86] being absolved of our crimes[87] and released from the chains that bind us to our sins.[88] Hence, we are strengthened to embrace a worthy way of life,[89] imbued by continence[90] and properly cleansed for the celebration of the great sacrament of love.[91]

Therefore, the work of our redemption is realized constantly through the mysteries[92] and the faithful are invited to obtain the invisible effects of the visible rites:[93] remedy for now and for the future,[94] indeed, an eternal remedy[95] and the medicine that saves us from condemnation,[96] eliciting the rejection of our temporal desires and obtaining the joys of heaven,[97] the eternal joys[98] that are the prize[99] given through the mysteries to those who profit from the salvation[100] celebrated and reenacted on the altar.[101]

The structure of the prayers, the constant use of active verbs (e.g., to merit, bear, acknowledge, obtain, attain, take possession), the frequent references to the effects of the celebration and to the realities of salvation, condemnation and heaven – all these stylistic and thematic elements support the conclusion that the connection between the graces of the liturgical celebration of the Cross and the necessary response to its gifts is indeed a chief aspect of the early Roman liturgy.

The Wood of Life and the New Paradise

The Cross as a gesture – as will be explained in the last theme of this section – is frequently sealed with oil. This practice leads to the study of another rich idea: the Cross as the new tree from which we obtain the sacramental oil that opens the door of the new paradise.

Several texts from the sacramentaries present oil as a precious gift, a rich liquid provided by one of the trees created by God. A beautiful composition, the preface of the Chrism Mass when oil is blessed for the sacraments, sings the goodness of the Lord for the gift of oil and all that it represents:

> It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation always, here and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, Holy Father, almighty eternal God, who, in the beginning among the other gifts of goodness and kindness, ordered the earth to produce fruit-bearing trees, among which the olive trees providing this most rich liquid arose, so that their fruit might be useful for sacred chrism.[102]

[85] Leonine, 459. [86] Gelasian, 245. [87] Gregorian, 181. [88] Gregorian, 640.
[89] Gelasian, 553. [90] Gregorian, 163. See also Paduense, 133 and 156.
[91] Leonine, 181. [92] Gelasian, 170. Also: Gelasian, 1196. [93] Leonine, 172.
[94] Gregorian, 437. [95] Leonine, 228. [96] Gelasian, 786. [97] Gelasian, 1065.
[98] Leonine, 108. Also: Leonine, 555. [99] Gelasian, 679. [100] Leonine, 106.
[101] Gregorian, 821. [102] Gelasian, 386.

The Gelasian mentions King David's praising the gift of oil: he, "foreknowing about the sacraments by the prophetic spirit of your grace, sang that our faces would be made joyful with oil"[103] (cf. Ps 104:15). Also, oil was a sign that announced the peace of the new creation after the flood: "And when the crimes of the world were being atoned for by the flood that had poured forth, in a likeness of a future gift the dove announced that peace had been returned to earth by showing a branch of olive wood."[104] And, as Aaron was anointed priest with oil, so in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness (cf. Heb 1:9), as we read in this long and beautiful prayer for the blessing of the oil at the Chrism Mass:

> And in the last times, this has been announced by visible effects in the Baptismal waters, which undo the guilt of all our sins, and may this anointment with oil render our faces joyful and serene.
>
> Then, you also bestowed on Moses, your servant, your instructions: that he should make his brother, Aaron, a priest, after he had been washed by water, by pouring on this ointment.
>
> More honor has been added to this, since your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, required that He be washed by John in the waves of the Jordan, and you pointed out your Only Begotten One by the Holy Spirit, in the likeness of a dove sent from on high, and by the testimony of the attending voice, saying that in Him you were most pleased, and at this time you very manifestly sanctioned that which David had sung, that he was anointed with the oil of gladness before his fellows.
>
> We beseech you, therefore, Lord, Holy Father, almighty, eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, to vouchsafe to sanctify the fat of this creature by your blessing and to mix into it the power of the Holy Spirit by the power of Jesus Christ, from whose name it takes the name chrism; therefore, you anointed your priests, kings, prophets, and martyrs, so that those who have been born again of water and the Holy Spirit may have the chrism of salvation, and so that you may make them participators in eternal life and sharers in heavenly glory.[105]

Jesus Christ the High Priest offers the new oil, the chrism that anoints kings, prophets, and priests. The already rich created good of oil is transformed by the Holy Spirit so that it can bring life not only to the body, but also to the soul: "Send forth, we pray, Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, from Heaven to be in this richness of oil, which you deigned to produce from a verdant tree for the refreshment of soul and body."[106]

The tree that provides this new sacramental oil is the Cross. Its living wood produces a sap that heals and feeds us, taking us to eternal life, as the collect for the feast of the *Inventio Crucis* [Discovery of the Cross]

[103] Gelasian, 386. [104] Gelasian, 386. [105] Gregorian, 387–388. [106] Gelasian, 382.

says: "God, who at the glorious finding of the salvation-bringing Cross of your Passion have brought forth miracles, grant that by the price of the living wood we may attain the right to eternal life."[107] The second collect offered by the Gelasian for that same feast goes further and not only describes the Cross as the wood of salvation, but even calls God himself *lignum vitae* [Wood of life]:

> God, whom every creature and all things which you have made in your wisdom by your word obey, we suppliantly beseech your ineffable mercy for those whom you deigned to redeem by the wood of the holy Cross with the blood of your Son, you who are the wood of life, the rebuilder of paradise, while all are praying that the deadly venom of the serpent is destroyed we beseech you that you always pour the cup of salvation with the grace of the Holy Spirit.[108]

The wood of the Cross was watered with the blood of Christ and we receive its most precious fruit in the outpouring of the cup of salvation. Cross and Eucharist are one mystery by the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose action transforms the Cross from suffering into medicine, the bitter taste of the fruit into sweet, and our exile into a return to the joys of paradise.[109] Therefore, we have "faith in the wood" and thus we pray with humility that, through the Cross, the new tree of the new Adam, the doors of paradise which were closed by the sin of the first Adam will be opened for us, as we ask in a prayer for the *Inventio Crucis*: "We suppliantly ask you, Lord, that our sins be washed away by this sacrifice, and that the help of your mercy, Lord, go before the devout prayers of our humility, and may our faith in the wood open again the salvation which a rash and too early enjoyment of the wood of paradise had closed through Adam."[110] Indeed, God has commanded that, through the wood of the holy Cross,

[107] Gelasian, 869. See also Paduense, 421.

[108] Gelasian, 870. For other testimonies about the Word as the tree of life, see Jean Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), 31.

[109] See Gregorian, 1609 (*Supplementum Anianense*): Through Christ, our Lord, who redeemed the world by the suffering of the Cross, and who, by the medicine of the Cross, made sweet the very bitter taste of the ancient tree, and, by the sign made from wood, utterly conquered death, which had come through the forbidden wood, so that, by the dispensation of His remarkable steadfastness, we, who had departed from the flower-bearing dwelling by the taste of the wood, may return through the wood of the Cross to the joys of paradise.

The *Supplementum Anianense* will be quoted only in a few instances and always in footnotes, as a relevant reference but not as part of the main body of this study, which focuses on the Roman sacramentaries we have available in the eighth century.

[110] Gregorian, 422. *Super oblata*. See also in Paduense, 422. See a very similar prayer on the occasion of the Exaltation of the Cross in Gelasian, 1024.

triumph over the evil hosts will be accomplished with the weapons of justice.[111]

In a rich theological vision, the Church recognizes in Jesus the new Adam, who through a new tree – the wood of the Cross – gives the oil of mercy of the sacraments that overcomes death and leads to a new paradise.[112] According to the pilgrim Egeria, during the fourth century rituals of Good Friday in Jerusalem, next to the bishop holding the relic of the Cross for public adoration, a deacon showed the ring of Solomon and the phial used to anoint the kings of Israel.[113] In this ritual we might find a possible connection with the idea of the new wood and its oil. The king was anointed with the oil, which gave him wisdom and came from the tree of life. The Cross is the new tree of life, and its sap is the true oil of mercy. The *Life of Adam and Eve* (first century AD) tells the story of the suffering Adam sending Seth and Eve to paradise to beg for the oil of mercy of the tree of life.[114] The angel Michael stopped them saying: "Truly I say to you that you are by no means able to take from it, except in the last days."[115] A Christian addition to that text would see in Jesus the fulfillment of Michael's words: "And when he, the Son of God, comes ... then he will anoint from the oil of mercy all who believe in him. And the oil of mercy shall be from generation to generation for those who are born again of water and the Holy Spirit into eternal life."[116] Baptism was seen as a return to Paradise.[117] As Jesus was the anointed one, the king was anointed too as son of God, and all Christians are anointed in Baptism, partaking in the kingship and priesthood of the Risen Lord. Therefore, in the presence of the phial in the rituals of Good Friday we can find a symbolic indication of the importance of the relation between kingship and Cross, and of the rituals of Baptism as a participation in the Cross and

[111] Paduense, 423. The wood of the Cross is also protection against the perils of the sea: Gregorian, 1322 (*Supplementum Anianense*). Several patristic commentators saw the Cross as the mast and ladder of the ship of the Church. See Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, 60 and 66.

[112] The trees in the eschatological paradise are the baptized and the saints, according to some ancient authors. See Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, 34.

[113] See *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage,* trans. George E. Gingras (New York: Newman Press, 1970), 110–113.

[114] For a study of the legend of Seth and its Christian developments see Esther Casier Quinn, *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[115] "Life of Adam and Eve" [Latin] in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, trans. and ed. James Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), II:274.

[116] *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II:274, footnote 42.

[117] See Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 128.

Resurrection of Christ: "The water is instead of the burial, the oil instead of the holy spirit, the seal instead of the cross."[118]

The Sacrifice

Entrance to the new paradise is obtained through the sacrifice of the Cross. "Sacrifice," as in patristic literature, is a crucial theme in the Roman sacramentaries, and an essential aspect of the liturgical approach of the Roman Church.

A first element that appears as noteworthy is the fact that the usage of the term *sacrificium* is eminently liturgical: there are no instances in which this word is used as a reference to the historical sacrifice of the Cross. Aside from a mention of the Lenten "sacrifice of fasting,"[119] the word *sacrificium* always indicates a liturgical action, the offering of the Eucharist. Even in the context of the Lenten fast which is in itself a sacrifice, the Church offers "the sacrifice" – that is, the Eucharist – praying for the fruits of fasting: "We solemnly immolate, Lord, a sacrifice at the beginning of the forty-day fast, beseeching you, Lord, that, by refraining from carnal feasting, we may also be spared from harmful pleasures."[120] Likewise, the sacrifice is offered for the sanctification of our fasting, expressing the harmony between human action and God's grace: we offer the fasting that is sanctified by the offering of the sacrifice of the Eucharist.[121] Indeed, the Eucharist, the offering of "this present sacrifice," is the *locus* where our efforts become truly beneficial to us: "At this present sacrifice, Lord, may the fasts dedicated to your name sanctify us, and may that which our bodily observance confesses, work its interior effect."[122]

The Eucharist is the "divine sacrifice" where we taste the things that give true health;[123] the "heavenly sacrifice" in which the unblemished Lamb is immolated;[124] and the "spiritual sacrifice" offered on the altar, as we read in a text for the blessing of the altar:

> We beseech, dearly beloved brothers, the mercy of God the almighty Father, so that He who is about to be invoked by our voice may sanctify with his helpful blessing this altar that is soon to be consecrated by spiritual sacrifices. May He do

[118] *Apostolic Constitutions* 3, 17. Cited in Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*, 100.
[119] Gelasian, 259. [120] Gregorian, 167. The same prayer is found in Gelasian, 106.
[121] Gelasian, 175. Similarly in Paduense, 171; Gelasian, 121; Paduense, 218; and Paduense, 190.
[122] Gelasian, 180. [123] Leonine, 31.
[124] Gelasian, 482. The same preface is found in Paduense, 343.

this so that on it He may always deign to bless and sanctify the oblations of his servants, which have been set down here in the zeal of their devotion. And, may He, struck by their spiritual incense, be a ready listener to His family when they pray.[125]

While there are special prayers for the blessing of the altar, its consecration is brought about by the spiritual sacrifices themselves, that is, by the offering of the Eucharist.[126] Again we can find the harmonious relation between gift and offering: the Church asks God to sanctify the oblations that she offers with devotion; God is struck by spiritual incense and thus listens to the prayers of his family. The Eucharist is, therefore, "the sacrifice of salvation"[127] that gives help and sanctification; "the sacrifice of atonement"[128] by which we offer the Victim that obtains forgiveness for our sins; and the "votive sacrifice" that is performed with devotion and faith.[129]

The awareness of this great gift moves the Church to perform the Eucharist as a "sacrifice of praise" as we read in the text for the dedication of a font according to the *Gelasianum*: "We suppliantly offer this sacrifice of praise to you, which is the mystery [*sacramentum*] of your faithfulness, Lord, so that in <this> place all the power of your grace may be celebrated";[130] or in the commemoration of saints, according to the Gregorian: "We are offering a sacrifice of praise to you, Lord, at the commemoration of your saints; grant, we pray, that that which has brought glory to them may advance our own salvation."[131] Praising God takes on the form of a sacrifice; and offering a sacrifice becomes the way of praising God. Accordingly, the Church acclaims the Eucharist as the "glorious"[132] and "venerable"[133] sacrifice.

The Eucharist is the "singular sacrifice," the unique offering of Christ, the Victim and Priest, offered once and for all; it is the "exceptional

[125] Gelasian, 693.

[126] The ceremony of consecration of the altar developed in the late fourth century, but from very early times a "quasi-consecration" took place through the Eucharistic celebration itself: once used for the Eucharist, the altar was holy and reserved exclusively for worship. See Stefan Heid, "The Early Christian Altar – Lessons for Today," in *Sacred Liturgy: The Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*, ed. Alcuin Reid (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 103.

[127] Gelasian, 1096.

[128] Leonine, 33. See also Gelasian, 1060. Other similar occurrences of *sacrificium placationis*: Paduense, 199; and Paduense, 809.

[129] See Leonine, 157 and 260.

[130] Gelasian, 733. See also Gelasian, 1650.

[131] Gregorian, 672. The same prayer is found in Paduense, 419. On the theme "sacrifice of praise," see also Gregorian, 703; Gelasian, 1068; Leonine, 106.

[132] See Paduense, 568. Same in Leonine, 427.

[133] See Paduense, 411 and 712.

sacrifice" in which the Church offers and God sanctifies and gives eternal life: "On behalf of the souls of those your servants, and of all those who are sleeping here, graciously accept, Lord, the Victim which has been offered, and may they merit eternal life by this exceptional sacrifice, since they have been freed from the bonds of a dreadful death."[134]

This sacrifice is an *action* that is "offered"[135] and "celebrated"[136] by the priest as a servant of God, as a proper prayer for the celebrant priest beautifully says: "Therefore, look upon this offering of my service, which I offer to you, as your servant and priest, on behalf of that for which you deigned to raise me to the priesthood, namely that I might zealously serve at your sacrifices and at your holy altar."[137] The priest is called to serve with zeal at the holy altar where Christ is offered. This sacrifice, truly unique for having Christ as both its Priest and Victim, puts away the old sacrifices of "carnal victims"[138] that were shadows of the new and spiritual sacrifice, the amazing and ineffable mystery of the immolation of the holy Victim that occurs in the Eucharist.[139]

The Eucharist is, therefore, the action performed, celebrated[140] and offered in the mystery of the sacrifice of the Mass. God's action blesses and sanctifies the Church's action, which is properly called the "immolation of the sacrifice": "Look upon the sacrifice, Lord, which we are immolating, so that it may free us from every evil of war and establish us in the security of your protection."[141] The priest, as a minister of the Church, immolates the sacrifice of Christ, and God blesses the immolation with his graces.[142]

As the Eucharist is offered, the Church asks God to "receive" the sacrifice that is presented to him. A prayer of the Gelasian implores God to accept the sacrifice with a blessing equal to the one given to Abel:

> God, you who have sanctified the variety of lawful victims by the perfection of one sacrifice, receive a sacrifice from your servants who are devoted to you and sanctify it with a blessing equal to that which you bestowed on the offering of Abel the just, so that that which each individual has offered to the honor of your majesty may be to the eternal benefit of all.[143]

God's reception of the sacrifice is beneficial to his people, who in turn receive from him eternal life. Therefore, the Church hopes that the

[134] Gelasian, 1682. See also Leonine, 463.
[135] See Leonine, 328; Gelasian, 1030, and Paduense, 247. [136] Leonine, 95.
[137] Gelasian, 1375. [138] Gelasian, 476. [139] See Leonine, 253.
[140] See Paduense, 95. [141] Gelasian, 1481.
[142] See Leonine, 48; Gregorian, 1333, and Paduense, 56. [143] Gelasian, 1188.

immolation will offer some "satisfaction"[144] for our sins and will thus "placate" and "please" God: "Receive, Lord, a sacrifice, by whose offering you have kindly wished to be pleased, and grant, we pray, that after we have been purged by the effectiveness of this sacrifice, we may offer the well pleasing affection of our mind to you."[145] The Eucharist is offered lifting up our hearts to the Lord and asking God to look and be pleased with the sacrifice repeated for Him: "Lord, be pleased to look upon the sacrifice that must be celebrated for you, so that it may purify us from the vices of our condition and so that it may return us as acceptable to your name."[146]

The Eucharistic sacrifice obtains peace. The Church celebrates the Cross as defense from all our adversaries, as is said in the feast of the Discovery of the Cross: "Look pleasingly upon the sacrifice, Lord, which we offer, so that it may wholly strip from us the evil of wars and, through the banner of the holy Cross of your Son, make us able to oppose the powers and snares of the adversaries by the security of your protection."[147] The religious observance of the sacrificial rites in the Roman sacramentaries is not informed by servile fear; rather, trust in the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ and the awareness of God's love move the Church to see the Eucharist as an encounter of offerings, as an exchange of looks: we look to God and God looks kindly on what we offer. "We pray, Lord, that you kindly look on these sacrifices, so that by our devotion they may benefit us on the way of salvation."[148] Our service appeases God who deigns to accept our immolation[149] and rewards our sincere charity.[150]

The Eucharist gives life to the Church whose offering of the Victim is blessed by God with abundant fruits.[151] The "grace of the sacrifice" gives "the light of intelligence to his servants,"[152] whose hearts are purified by participation in the "glorious sacrifice": "Receive the offerings [*hostias*] of our devotion, we pray, Lord, and by the glorious sacrifice purify the hearts of those subject to you."[153] Our vices are also purified as the grace of the sacrament restores God's people.[154] The minds of the faithful are sanctified[155] and restored by the "immaculate sacrifice":[156] "We are offering a sacrifice, Lord, proper to the Paschal observance; grant, we

[144] Gelasian, 1659. [145] Leonine, 1302. [146] Leonine, 523. [147] Gelasian, 871.
[148] Gelasian, 1138. [149] See Gelasian, 101. [150] See Gelasian, 780.
[151] See Paduense, 67. [152] Leonine, 248. [153] Leonine, 427.
[154] See Gelasian, 1129. See also Gelasian, 1362. [155] See Gregorian, 151.
[156] See Paduense, 449.

pray, that this sacrifice may restore our minds to you, after they have been approved by you, and may it bestow on us the power to practice an easy continence."[157] The Eucharist is, indeed, the sacrifice that gives nourishment and new life to the Church, as is said on the day after Easter: "We offer with paschal joy, Lord, the sacrifices with which your Church is marvelously reborn and nourished."[158]

The usage of the term *sacrificium* in the Roman sacramentaries is not only abundant but also profoundly rich. The sacrifice is divine, heavenly, spiritual; it is the sacrifice of salvation, of atonement, of praise; a votive and exceptional sacrifice. It is an action that is celebrated, offered, and immolated by the Church on the holy altar; an action that is received by God, who is pleased to find in it satisfaction and to offer grace that purifies and sanctifies his people. The Eucharist is, simply, "the sacrifice itself." On the celebration of Holy Thursday, the Gelasian contains a rubric that expresses the importance of the identification between Eucharist and sacrifice: as the Mass is not celebrated on the following day, after communion the priest reserves "a remnant of the sacrifice itself for tomorrow."[159] Remarkably, the consecrated host is simply and without any clarification called "the sacrifice itself." In the Eucharist, the presence of the Lord and the offering of the Victim of the Cross are one reality: the sacrifice itself of Christ, given to the Church and offered to the glory of God and for the sanctification of his people.

The Holy Victim of the Altar

The Eucharist is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Holy Victim [*Hostia*] offered on the altar. The term "Victim" is another relevant expression of the Roman emphasis on the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist.

Hostia is frequently used in the plural (*hostias*), referring to its ritual meaning: the offerings or sacrifices immolated on the altar. These are the offerings of the Church, who in her supplications asks God: "Receive the prayers and oblations [*hostias*] of your Church."[160] These Eucharistic

[157] Gregorian, 163. The same prayer is found in Paduense, 156. On continence as a fruit of the Eucharist, see also Gelasian, 86.

[158] Gelasian, 470. The same prayer appears in Gregorian, 409.

[159] Gelasian, 390. "But when this has indeed been completed, you will come before the altar, you place on your mouth the chalice of the victim himself; you do not say 'the Peace of the Lord' and they do not make the sign of peace; but they communicate, and from that which they have communicated, and they reserve [a remnant] of the sacrifice itself for the following day, from which they may communicate."

[160] Gelasian, 1507.

offerings are then often personally appropriated: "our oblations"[161] are those "of your family;"[162] the oblations "of your people"[163] and "of your servants."[164]

Along with this personal approach, we find a sense of reverence towards the ritual offerings. They are the "pious sacrifices,"[165] the "offerings of mercy,"[166] the "spiritual"[167] oblation that is received and offered with devotion: "Receive the offerings of our devotion, we pray, Lord, and by this glorious sacrifice purify the hearts of those subject to you."[168]

The "hallowed Victim"[169] of the Eucharist not only purifies our hearts, but it also constantly carries out the work of our redemption, as the priest asks, according to the Gelasian: "Receive, Lord, we pray, the Victim for the redemption of mankind, and kindly grant to us health of soul and body."[170] The Victim of the altar is, indeed, a "salutary"[171] Victim that is more than a symbol and ought to be "surveyed" with reverence in order to welcome its effects: "As we survey the Paschal Victim, we pray, Lord, that we may know the effect of that which we frequently perform by our actions."[172] These words acknowledge the need of God's grace to overcome routine and arise to a profound spiritual knowledge of what is frequently performed in the liturgical actions.

The specific action performed by the Church is the "offering" of the Victim,[173] prefigured in David's offering of an acceptable holocaust that obtained God's indulgence and averted his anger (cf. 2 Sam 24:25).[174] This liturgical offering is an act of atonement:[175] aware of the faults of her servants, the Church, echoing the old sacrifices in the new and definitive Victim, seeks to obtain mercy and forgiveness from God: "We offer a Victim of atonement to you, Lord, so that you may mercifully wash away our sins and direct our errant hearts."[176]

[161] Gelasian, 867.
[162] Gelasian, 75. The same prayer is found in the formula 341 of the Gelasian and in Paduense, 122.
[163] Gelasian, 633.
[164] Gelasian, 1432. See also Gelasian, 758, and Gregorian, 1496 and 1550.
[165] Gelasian, 392. [166] Gelasian, 1024. [167] Leonine, 201 and 216.
[168] Leonine, 427. See also Gregorian, 788. [169] Leonine, 127. Same in: Gelasian, 1103.
[170] Gelasian, 1298.
[171] Gelasian, 145. See also for instances of *hostia salutaris*: Gelasian, 1215 and 1391. Same in: Paduense, 650; Gelasian 1387.
[172] Gelasian, 491. [173] Gregorian, 640. [174] Gelasian, 1570.
[175] See Gregorian, 181. Other occurrences of *hostias placatus* in: Paduense, 113, 731, 854; Gelasian, 475.
[176] Gelasian, 1370.

The Holy Victim is also offered for the dead, for whom the Church performs "a sacrifice of humble atonement," asking of God's mercy the "reward and gift"[177] of eternal life for the souls of the faithful departed who "remained in the light of the Catholic faith":[178] "We offer to you, Lord, a sacrifice of humble atonement, so that the souls of your servants and handmaids may receive perpetual mercy through this propitiatory service."[179]

It is significant that the offering of atonement is not seen negatively, but rather frequently, as an act of praise.[180] Indeed, this act of praise celebrated to the honor of God,[181] through his favor and the ministry of the angels, benefits the work of our salvation.[182] The offering of the Victim is, simultaneously, "an offering of atonement and praise" that obtains salvation for the faithful: "Receive an offering of atonement and praise, Lord, which we offer to you in honor of the nativity of the blessed and glorious, ever Virgin, Mother of God, Mary, and may her holy intercessions profit us for salvation."[183] The Victim of atonement and praise brings reconciliation with God: "May this Victim of atonement and praise, we pray, Lord, always make us worthy of reconciliation with you."[184]

The Church's liturgical offering of praise fulfills what was prefigured in the types of the old covenant, particularly – as it appears as well in the Roman Canon – those of Abel, Abraham, and Melchizedek: "While we continually immolate the offering of praise to you, a type of which Abel the just first established, and the lamb of the old law also prefigured, and which Abraham solemnized, and the priest Melchizedek himself represented, but the true lamb, the eternal priest, Christ, born today, fulfilled."[185]

The new Victim is offered on "the altar of atonement": "We shall place the Victim on your altar of atonement, Lord, in order to honor your power in the suffering of your saints, and in order to beg through them forgiveness of our sins."[186] At the altar, where the Victim is shown, as God is honored and we receive forgiveness,[187] we find the true joy of knowing that our offering of praise brings Christ himself to his Church: "Therefore,

[177] See Gelasian, 1673. [178] Gelasian, 1663. [179] Gelasian, 1668.
[180] See Paduense, 701. *Hostias laudis* also found in: Paduense, 847; Gelasian, 1089.
[181] See Gelasian, 776. [182] Gregorian, 727.
[183] Gelasian, 1017. See also for other occurrences of *hostia placationis et laudis*: Gelasian, 1645; Gregorian, 181; Paduense, 752; Paduense, 178.
[184] Gregorian, 752. [185] Gelasian, 20.
[186] Gelasian, 912. Same prayer in: Leonine, 270. [187] See Paduense, 629.

as we rejoice amidst your altars, Lord of hosts, we offer a Victim of praise to you."[188]

The offering of the Sacred Victim brings fruits to the lives of the faithful: expiation of sin and rapid assistance from on high – "Kindly receive the offering, Lord, we pray, which we are immolating, both for the expiation of our sins and for the hastening of assistance from on high."[189] It also undoes the bonds of iniquity, helping us to receive the gifts of God's mercy,[190] and to go from temporal consolation to the hope of the eternal promises: "We bring, Lord, what must be offered as a victim to you, who signify by temporal consolation that we ought not despair of eternal promises."[191]

Finally, the immolation of the Sacred Victim seeks to please God, not only as the offering of those who participate in a particular celebration of the Eucharist, but as the offering of the whole Church, in union with the prayers of the saints in heaven: "May this Victim, which is about to be offered in accompaniment with the worthy requests of your saints, make your majesty pleased with us."[192]

In sum, the Victim offered in the liturgy that fulfills all other sacrifices is Christ himself, who, as he receives honor and glory from the hearts of the faithful, gives forgiveness of sins and assistance, granting the hope of knowing that his permanent presence constantly renews his eternal promises. The Victim is Christ; the Victim is the Eucharistic offering. According to the Gelasian, at the end of the Chrism Mass the priest, before the communion of the faithful, places on his mouth "the chalice of the victim himself."[193] Jesus Christ, the Victim of the Cross, is present in the chalice; he, the sacrifice himself, gives life as his offering is constantly renewed.

The Visible and Ineffable Mystery

Just as the Victim *is* the Eucharist, so the idea of mystery is closely related to the Eucharist itself, particularly as its liturgical celebration. Aside from a few more specific usages of the word, such as the mystery of the Trinity,[194] of the Lord's Nativity,[195] of the Cross,[196] of Mary,[197] of eternity[198] and of light,[199] *mysterium* is normally used in reference to the celebration of the liturgical rites. For example, the Church asks God to

[188] Gelasian, 627. [189] Gelasian, 1514. [190] See Gelasian, 1050. [191] Leonine, 488.
[192] Gelasian, 1054. [193] Gelasian, 390. [194] See Gelasian, 9.
[195] See Gelasian, 2. Also: Gelasian, 7. [196] See Gelasian, 1023. [197] See Gelasian, 994.
[198] See Gelasian, 68. [199] See Gelasian, 5.

make the liturgy effective with these words: "We pray, Lord, that you make your mysteries effective, so that we may offer these gifts to you with pure minds."[200] Similarly, on the occasion of the ordination of deacons, we pray that through the sacraments, Christ's redemption will be welcomed both in mystery, that is, through what is celebrated, and through the way of living: "Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this sacrament, that we may come to possess your salvation both in mystery and in the manner of our life."[201] Also, the Paschal Mystery is "encompassed as a sign [*mysterio*] in fifty days"[202] and renewed through the sacred liturgy.

The mysteries of Jesus' body and blood were entrusted to the Church during the Last Supper: the liturgical treasure of the Eucharist handed over to the disciples.[203] The Eucharistic mysteries were given as the mysteries of the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord, the Paschal Mysteries.[204] Consequently, the Church beseeches God's mercy invoking the institution of the Paschal liturgy by the blood of Christ: "Remember your mercies, O Lord, and with your eternal protection sanctify your servants, for whom Christ your Son, by the shedding of his Blood, established the Paschal Mystery."[205] The celebration of the Paschal Mystery increases the devotion of the faithful[206] and consecrates the prayers that accompany the offering of the Victim: "Accept, we ask, O Lord, the prayers of your people with the sacrificial offerings that what has begun in the Paschal Mysteries may, by the working of your power, bring us to the healing of eternity."[207]

The Eucharist is "the mystery of the new sacrament": "Grant, we pray, Lord, that we may know by our body and soul the mystery of the new sacrament which has been received by us."[208] The prayers of the sacramentaries transmit a deep sense of reverence towards the Eucharistic

[200] Gelasian, 158.

[201] Gelasian, 161. The same prayer is found in formula 218. English version found in the Roman Missal of 1975/2011 for Thursday of the third week of Lent.

[202] Leonine, 191. The English version was taken from the Collect for the Vigil Mass of Pentecost according to the Roman Missal of 1975/2011. Other occurrences of *mysterium* as the liturgical rites celebrated: Leonine, 97; Leonine, 184; Gelasian, 231; Paduense, 96; Paduense, 396.

[203] See Gelasian, 371.

[204] See Paduense, 426.

[205] Gelasian, 334. The English translation is taken from the first option for the Collect on Good Friday, in the 1975/2011 Roman Missal.

[206] Gelasian, 235.

[207] Gelasian, 456. This *super oblata* prayer is used as the prayer over the offerings for the Easter Vigil in the Roman Missal of 1975/2011, from where this English version is taken.

[208] Gelasian, 373. See also Gelasian, 393.

mystery. It is called the "divine"[209] and "great mystery;"[210] it is revered as the "holy mystery" in which we participate, and thus make "expiation for our sins" and gain "strength against temptations,"[211] "purity of mind,"[212] "spiritual nourishment and physical help,"[213] "forgiveness and fortification."[214]

The liturgical celebration of the Eucharist is also honored as the "sacred mysteries"[215] that the Church carries out: "Look graciously, O Lord, upon the sacred mysteries we celebrate here, and may what you have mercifully provided to cancel the judgment we incurred bear for us fruit in eternal life."[216] The holiness of this action is highlighted with the use of the term "sacrosanct":[217] "We pray, Lord Our God, that while the saints are interceding on our behalf we may follow with our minds the sacrosanct mystery that we frequently perform with our actions."[218] The liturgy of the Eucharist is certainly a gift from God, but it also involves the cooperation of the Church through what "we frequently perform with our actions." From its sacredness we are fortified,[219] sanctified, and filled with eternal joys.[220]

The "blessed mysteries"[221] are at the same time visible and ineffable. The very nature of the sacred liturgy involves visible signs perceptible to our senses, that help us participate and receive its invisible effects.[222] At the same time, the mystery of the liturgy transcends what we can express, and it is properly called an "ineffable mystery": "Since the shadows of carnal victims have been removed, highest Father, we in humble servitude bring you a victim, which is always offered in the marvelous and ineffable mystery, and it is simultaneously the duty of the faithful and the recompense of the One who rewards."[223]

The ineffable and visible mystery is also frequently called the "heavenly mystery."[224] A collect prayed by the bishop on the day of his ordination beautifully highlights the contrast between the lack of personal merits and

[209] See Gelasian, 132. [210] Gelasian, 428. [211] Gelasian, 1208. [212] Gelasian, 265.
[213] Gelasian, 1291. [214] Leonine, 453. The same prayer is found in Paduense, 630.
[215] See Gelasian, 461. See also: Gelasian, 828; Gelasian, 1492, and Paduense, 211.
[216] Gelasian, 336. English version taken from the 1975/2011 Roman Missal – Prayer over the offerings for Monday of Holy Week.
[217] Leonine, 174. [218] Leonine, 325. [219] Gregorian, 437. [220] Paduense, 571.
[221] See Gelasian, 131. For other instances of *beata mysteria*, see: Gelasian, 202; Gelasian, 845.
[222] See Leonine, 172. [223] Leonine, 253.
[224] See Leonine, 82. Other mentions of *caelesti mysterio* in: Leonine, 214; Leonine, 459; Leonine, 583; Gelasian, 952; Gelasian, 1520; Gregorian, 746; Paduense, 572.

the gift of God's grace in being called to be a servant of the heavenly mysteries:

> God, Creator and ruler of the world, look kindly upon me your servant and the prayers of my humility; you have deigned that I serve in your heavenly mysteries, not because any merit of mine speaks on my behalf, but because of the immense generosity of your mercy; render me a worthy minister at your altar, so that that which is brought forth while my voice is raised may be established by your sanctification.[225]

This prayer, meaningfully said by the bishop at his ordination, acknowledges the harmony of divine abundance and human limitation, brought together by God's mercy. The newly ordained bishop offers a humble prayer and receives divine assistance; his lack of human merit is filled by the generosity of God, and then the mystery of the liturgy occurs: the gifts brought to the altar are "established" by the prayers received from God and pronounced by the bishop.

It is not only those who serve at the altar who share in the awe and reverence towards the mystery. Every member of the faithful who partakes in the heavenly liturgy is called to make the effort to be "more ready" for the celebration, as we ask during Lent: "We pray, Lord, that your grace, which must be obtained by holy fasting, have its effect on us and render us more ready for the heavenly mysteries."[226] Based on a good disposition, the graces of the heavenly mysteries bring healing[227] and defense against the enemy.[228] Performing [*agit*] the mystery, that is, celebrating the liturgy, perfects virtue[229] and helps us in our infirmities;[230] the gift of the sacred mystery which we receive, that is, the Body and Blood of Christ, brings medicine for the vices of the heart.[231] Ultimately, the fruit of the liturgical action is, in a significant expression, the effective and constant accomplishment of the work of our redemption: "Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that we may participate worthily in these mysteries, for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished."[232]

[225] Gelasian, 775. [226] Gelasian, 250. [227] See Gelasian, 1193.
[228] See Gelasian, 645. [229] See Paduense, 391. [230] Paduense, 747.
[231] Paduense, 724.
[232] Gelasian, 170. The same prayer in Gelasian, 1196; Leonine, 93. The "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" of the Second Vatican Council quotes this prayer in its introduction: "For the liturgy, 'through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,' most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church." *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2. This prayer is said in the Missal

The Cross as a Liturgical Gesture

The Cross has a central place in the liturgical life of the Church not only as an idea, as has been seen in the previous themes, but also as a gesture. In this practical connection of Cross and Eucharist we encounter decisive elements for the present study.

At the celebration of the Exaltation of the Cross[233] the Church prays that, as the participants in the liturgical celebration adore the Cross, they may be freed of their sins: "God, you who deigned to redeem the human race by the precious blood of your Only Begotten One, our Lord, Jesus Christ, grant kindly that those who come to adore the life-giving Cross may be freed from the debt of their sins."[234] It is worth noting that in the context of this feast, the prayer does talk about adoring the Cross itself, certainly as a symbol of Jesus and his love and not as the adoration of a material object.[235] The same is found in the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday: once the Cross has been placed on the altar the priest prostrates himself and then he leads the congregation in prayer.[236] After this, the Gelasian offers a precise instruction: "And the priest comes before the altar adoring the Cross of the Lord and kissing it."[237] The adoration of the Cross is a unique practice that is intimately connected with the early feasts of the Cross, particularly the celebration of Good Friday and the Exaltation of the Cross, and shows the deep identification between Christ and his Cross. This is evident as we read the rubric that follows the priest's adoration of the Cross: "When all these things have been completed, all adore the holy Cross and receive communion."[238] The same Christ, truly present in the Eucharist, is adored on the Cross.[239]

of Paul VI on Holy Thursday, on the second Sunday in Ordinary Time, and at the Votive Mass of Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest.

[233] For an account of the history of the Exaltation of the Cross in Rome, see Stephan Borgehammar, "Heraclius Learns Humility: Two early Latin Accounts Composed for the Celebration of *Exaltatio Crucis*," *Millennium* 6 (2009): 145–201.

[234] Gregorian, 690.

[235] On certain objections and the responses of several patristic authors in regard to the adoration of the Cross, see Philip Smith, *The History of the Christian Church, During the First Ten Centuries* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1879), 443–444.

[236] Gelasian, 395. [237] Gelasian, 418. [238] Gelasian, 418.

[239] The Cross is, in one sense, more than a mere sign. In certain texts it appears "like a living being … a reality in its own right." See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; Chicago: The Henry Regnery Company, 1964), 266.

The Cross is also a gesture that conveys a profound symbolism, and, when made over persons and objects, is powerful and necessary for the efficacy of the liturgical rites.

The Cross is sealed upon the elect as they prepare for Baptism on the days before Holy Week. In doing so, the priest says: "Mercifully hear our prayers, we pray, Lord, and guard your elect with the strength of the Lord's Cross, by the impression of which we are sealed, so that, while holding onto the first beginnings of immense glory by guarding your commands, they may merit to approach the glory of regeneration."[240] In the same context, prayers of exorcism are said over the elect. After commanding the devil to give honor to God and depart from his servant, the priest impresses the sign of the Cross on the elect, a sign that will defeat any evil:

> Therefore, accursed devil, recognize your sentence and give honor to the living and true God, and give honor to Jesus Christ, His Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and withdraw from these servants of God, since God and our Lord Jesus Christ for their honor have deigned to call them to their holy grace and benediction and to the font, the gift of Baptism. Through this sign of the Holy Cross, which we give on the foreheads of these men, never, accursed devil, dare to make an attack.[241]

The prayers for the exorcism found in the appendix of the Gelasian invoke the power of Christ and his Cross upon the devil: "Yield, yield not to me but to the mysteries of Christ. For the power of that one distresses you greatly, who has overcome you by fastening you to his Cross."[242] And later the priest claims the dominion of "the sacrament of the Cross" and the "strength of the mysteries": "The sacrament of the Cross commands you, the strength of the mysteries commands you."[243] Because of this victorious power and the protection it offers, the Cross is traced as a holy sign used in defense against the devil:

> But you, almighty God, kindly be present, so that a man possessed by bodily demons may be purged of all diabolical evil + by your power in this sign of the holy Cross, which you gave us; you accursed demon, never dare to make an assault; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come with the Holy Spirit to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire.[244]

At the celebration of Baptism, the Gelasian gives precise instructions for the priestly action with respect to catechumens: "When you receive

[240] Gelasian, 286. The same text is found in the *Supplementum Anianense*: Gregorian, 1066.
[241] Gelasian, 292. [242] Gelasian, 1715. This appendix is the so-called Paris folio.
[243] Gelasian, 1716. [244] Gelasian, 1723.

a pagan, first catechize him with godlike words and teach him the commandments, how he ought to live after he has recognized the truth. After these things, make him a catechumen: breathe into his face and make the Cross for him on his forehead; place your hand on his head with these words."[245] The Cross is made on the forehead as a sign of protection, but has to be received as well in the heart: "Receive the sign of the Cross as on your forehead so on your heart."[246] Becoming part of the Church results in a transformative experience of rejecting evil and becoming a temple of God. Thus, Baptism gives, for those who accept the sign of the Cross, an eternal crown[247] and eternal life.[248]

The Cross has the power to transform objects into efficacious means of sacramental grace. Water is sanctified for sacramental use on the night of Easter by the sign of the Cross made upon it several times, as indicated in the Gregorian sacramentary in a wonderful composition:

> Therefore, I bless you, the creature water, + by the living God, + by the holy God, who by his word, in the beginning, separated you from the dry land, and ordered that the whole land be watered by four rivers; who, although you were bitter, made you potable in the desert, by applying sweetness, and who made you come from a rock for his thirsty people. + I bless you by Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who at Cana in Galilee, turned you into wine by his admirable power; who walked on you with his feet, and was baptized with you by John in the Jordan; who brought you out, together with his blood, from his side, and ordered his disciples to baptize with you those who believe, saying "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[249]

During the Easter Vigil the Paschal Candle is sealed with the Cross before it begins to irradiate and communicate the light of Christ's victory, as the archdeacon takes hold of the candle which was hidden on Friday "making the Cross on the wax and illuminating it."[250]

In the context of the dedication of a new basilica, the paten, which will hold the sacrificed body of Christ, is consecrated through the remembrance of the Cross and with its sign: "We consecrate and make holy this paten in order to confect on it the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who endures the Cross for the salvation of us all."[251] And after the words referring to the Cross are pronounced, its sign made with the holy oil brings God's blessing and consecrates the object for the exclusive service of God's worship: "Then, you make the sign of the Cross on the paten

[245] Gelasian, 598. [246] Gelasian, 599. [247] See Gelasian, 592.
[248] See Gelasian, 615.
[249] Gregorian, 374c. For the blessing of salt, see *Supplementum Anianense*, 1071–1072.
[250] Gelasian, 425. [251] Gelasian, 696.

with holy oil, and say this prayer: Deign to consecrate and bless, Lord, this paten by this unction and our blessing: in Christ Jesus Our Lord, who lives and reigns."[252]

Finally, the Gelasian sacramentary indicates the crosses to be made by the priest during the Roman Canon.[253] At the beginning of the Canon, during the *Te igitur*, the priest makes five crosses upon the offerings, as he says: "that you accept and bless + these gifts +, these offerings +, these holy + and unblemished sacrifices +." The Cross does not appear, as some have said,[254] just as a stylized way of pointing to an object, but as an indication of the relation of the Eucharistic offering with the sacrifice of the Cross, and, more specifically, a sign that effectively blesses the gifts to be consecrated.

It is significant that the Cross is seen as a powerful instrument of God's power, capable of communicating grace and efficacy to people and objects, and as the seal that brings protection and leads to eternal life. There is a close and familiar connection between Cross and blessing, protection, and power. What is the root of that connection? Why is the act of blessing identified with making a Cross? Why is the Cross so intimately connected with sacramental efficacy? Why does sealing mean tracing the sign of the Cross?

A review of the idea of "seal" [*sphragis*][255] in relation to the Cross can shed light on these questions. At the root of this view is the relation between Baptism and seal: *sphragis* referred to the rite of making the sign of the Cross on the forehead during Baptism, or, in some cases, to Baptism itself, as it is found in a significant number of early Christian testimonies, such as Clement of Rome, The Shepherd of Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, the Acts of Thomas, and others.[256] Indeed, Baptism was

[252] Gelasian, 697. For blessings on the oil see *Supplementum Anianense*, 1082; see also formula 1086.

[253] See Gelasian, 1244. For a commentary on the Roman Canon, see Chapter II, §2.

[254] See an account of this in Matthew S. Ernest, "The Postconciliar Reform of the Sign of the Cross and the Imposition of Hands over the Gifts in the Roman Canon," in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 127 (2013): 286.

[255] In order to understand the idea of seal according to the context of Scripture and early Christian literature, we will study the Greek term *sphragis* (σφραγίς).

[256] See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, second edition revised and augmented (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 804. Gottfried Fitzer thinks that the first unequivocal reference to baptism as seal is *The Shepherd of Hermas*. See Fitzer, "σφραγίς," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friederich (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), VII:952. Daniélou mentions also 2Cor 1:22 and Eph 1:13 as possible references to *sphragis* as Baptism. See Jean

seen as receiving God's holy seal (John Chrysostom, Basil, Serapion, and others), his own stamp, and thus being part of his possessions (Melito, Cyril of Jerusalem).[257] The seal of the Cross would, therefore, signify God's protection and possession,[258] particularly against evil and as a safeguard against demons,[259] and, for that reason, used in exorcisms and conjurations.[260] At Baptism, *sphragis* would impress God's image indelibly, introducing the Christian into Christ's flock and enlisting him in his army. *Sphragis* is the new sign of the covenant, the definitive circumcision.[261]

The Cross is seen as an eschatological seal that secures protection at the last judgment; believers will be recognized on the last day by the sign of the Cross,[262] whose sealing brings with it the legal aspect of inviolability.[263] This eschatological identification of seal and Cross is of great antiquity, as is attested by the presence of crosses on Jewish graves and by the reference to Ezekiel 9:4 in Revelation 7:2.[264] As early as the *Didache*, the sign of the Son of Man was understood as the Cross.[265] It is not difficult, therefore, to comprehend why the practice of sealing through the sign of the Cross occurred so early and so extensively.

The reality of making the sign of the Cross leads to a reflection on its importance in the liturgical life of the Church. The *Encyclopedia of Christianity* states that "The *Sitz im Leben* of the sign and symbolism of

Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 55. For the Jewish Christian background of this view, see Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 328.

257 See *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1355. See also the important work of Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), esp. 218–220, 312, 338.

258 See Erika Dinkler-von Schubert, "Cross," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 2005), I:734.

259 See G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1967), 262.

260 See Frank C. Senn, "Sign of the Cross," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, V: 7.

261 See Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 514, 559–560. See also Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 57–65.

262 See *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1356.

263 See Dinkler-von Schubert, "Cross," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, I:734.

264 Ibid. The text of Revelation had a specific sign in view, possibly relating the Cross with the Hebrew letter *tau*. See Fitzer, "σφραγίς," 951.

265 See "The Didache," 16, 6 in *The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, The Epistles and the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, The Fragments of Papias, The Epistle to Diognetus*, trans. James A. Kleist (New York: Newman Press, 1948), 25.

the Cross was the liturgy and cultus, and primarily baptism."[266] Indeed, it is not possible truly to understand the sign of the Cross outside the liturgy; in it we find its context and the key to discern the centrality of "the cross as cultic *sphragis* and as historical *stauros* [Cross]."[267]

While Baptism is unquestionably permeated with the symbolism of the Cross,[268] it seems pertinent to explore more broadly the liturgical context of *sphragis*. Is the meaning of *sphragis* limited to Baptism? Saint Gregory of Nyssa responds to Eunomius' objections to certain practices, among which he mentions the sign of the Cross:

> For if the confession of the revered and precious Names of the Holy Trinity is useless, and the customs of the Church unprofitable, and if among these customs is the sign of the cross [*sphragis*], prayer, baptism, confession of sins, a ready zeal to keep the commandments, right ordering of character, sobriety of life, regard to justice, the effort not to be excited by passion, or enslaved by pleasure, or to fall short in moral excellence, – if he says that none of such habits as these is cultivated to any good purpose, and that the sacramental tokens do not, as we have believed, secure spiritual blessings, and avert from believers the assaults directed against them by the wiles of the evil one, what else does he do but openly proclaim aloud to men that he deems the mystery which Christians cherish a fable, laughs at the majesty of the Divine Names, considers the customs of the Church a jest, and all sacramental operations idle prattle and folly?[269]

It is significant that in Gregory's enumeration of certain spiritual, sacramental, and moral practices, *sphragis* is mentioned first and is clearly distinguished from Baptism: "*sphragis*, prayer, baptism, confession of sins." Although the meaning of *sphragis* in this text is not straightforward, it does not refer to Baptism and, other liturgical practices having been mentioned, it is appropriate to explore a different significance. In fact, the use of *sphragis* goes beyond the rites of Baptism: there are instances in which it is used to refer to the signing with the Cross in the rites of ordination[270] and most notably, to the Eucharist, as the signing of the

[266] Dinkler-von Schubert, "Cross," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, I:735.
[267] Ibid.
[268] See Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 261; Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 277–278; Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 344, 355, 459, 524, 540, 700, 753, 760–761.
[269] Gregory of Nyssa, "Against Eunomius," in *Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, etc.*, vol. V of A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd ser., eds. P. Schaff and H. Wace (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1893), 238. The original Greek is found in *Gregorius Nyssenus, Contra Eunomium*. W. Jaeger, *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, vols. 1.1 & 2.2 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1.1:3–409; 2.2:3–311.
[270] See *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1354.

elements and as a reference to the Eucharistic Body of Christ.[271] We find crosses stamped on cultic cakes and on sacrificial vessels;[272] the portion of the Holy Loaf marked with the Cross was simply called the *sphragis*;[273] and a remarkable number of testimonies of the earliest liturgies, both Eastern and Western, show that the action of sealing with the Cross was repeated frequently in the Eucharistic rituals,[274] particularly as making the sign of the Cross over the assembly,[275] the bread and wine,[276] and

[271] Ibid., 1354–1355. Some pagan rituals observed the practice of sealing the victim before the sacrifice. See *A Greek-English Lexicon,* eds. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1742.

[272] Fitzer, "σφραγίς," 952, footnote 98. Also, in Gnostic writings, such as the *Acts of Thomas*, the Eucharist is associated with the seal, and "those who have received the seal get the bread with the sign of the Cross impressed on it." 952–953.

[273] See *Liturgies: Eastern and Western*, ed. C. E. Hammond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878), 390.

[274] Although a review of the rite of sealing with the Cross in Eastern and Western Eucharistic liturgies exceeds the aim of this section on the Roman sacramentaries, it is however interesting and enlightening to offer some examples of this common practice, even if there is not necessarily a direct geographic or chronological connection with the Roman sacramentaries. All the examples have been found in the old but still relevant anthologies of *Liturgies: Eastern and Western*, ed. C. E. Hammond and *Liturgies: Eastern and Western*, ed. F. E. Brightman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896). Henceforth, we will quote as Hammond or Brightman and the page number.

[275] The sign of the Cross is made over the congregation on several occasions. According to the Liturgy of the Orthodox Armenian Church, before the reading of the Gospel, invoking God's peace to all, and in the final blessing (Hammond, 145–168); James of Edessa writes a letter to Thomas the Presbyter describing the liturgical rites and says that "at the time of the Cross," when "the priest is about to begin the mystic ministry" and when the people "have collected their thoughts" the priest, turning and "saying Peace be to you all, makes over them the sign of the Cross" (Brightman, 491); the Syrian Liturgy of Saint James also indicates that the sign of the Cross is made over the people by the priest before the reading of the epistle (Hammond, 64); in the Coptic Liturgy the priest signs the people with the Cross before the consecration and imploring God's mercy at the kiss of peace (Hammond, 200, 201, 205, 222); the same is done in the Syrian Liturgy of St. James (Hammond, 68); three times a Cross is signed during the Triumphal Hymn (Sanctus): over the priest himself, over the ministers and over the people (*Liturgia Coptiatarum* – Hammond, 207); the liturgy of Addai and Mari commands the priest to make the sign of the Cross over the people right before communion (Hammond, 280).

[276] Before the consecration, the wine is poured cross-wise into the chalice as in the Liturgy of the Orthodox Armenian Church (Hammond, 139); in the Liturgy of the Armenians, during the arrangement of the oblation or *prothesis* (Brightman, 421); in the anaphora of Addai and Mari, where the water is also poured in the form of the Cross (Brightman, 251) and the dough receives also the seal of the Cross with oil (Brightman, 248); the bread is also signed with the Cross during the preparation of the altar in the Syrian liturgy of Saint James (Hammond, 57) and thrice in the rituals of the Liturgy of the Coptics, in which the priest moves the chalice making the form of the Cross and later makes three times the sign of the Cross over the chalice (Hammond, 211–213).

liturgical objects;[277] during the consecration;[278] and at the communion rite.[279]

The seal of the Cross received in Baptism introduces the Christian into the sacramental life of faith; it is the seal that brings about perfection.[280] The perfect [*teleioi*] have been initiated by Baptism;[281] the possibility of reaching fulfillment is rooted in that sacrament and nurtured in communion. In this sense, the perfect are those who have received the Spirit in Baptism and can therefore partake in the mystery of the Eucharist. Through these mysteries, Christian perfection, understood as true wisdom,[282] is achieved, with the Holy Spirit being the author of any perfection.[283] The Holy Spirit is the *sphragis*[284] that marks the baptized Christian with the Cross and fulfills all perfection with the Eucharist. Through the Cross, the Spirit gives sacramental efficacy to the liturgical rites of the Church: "The sign of the Cross is necessary in every sacramental action."[285] The Cross seals the initiation of every Christian, from Baptism to the Eucharist, which is the *sphragis* of the new covenant and assurance of salvation.

[277] Over the incense (Hammond, 199–200) and with the incense, the mysteries are signed three times with the Cross (Hammond, 61–62). The *phaino* is signed with three crosses (Brightman, 70).

[278] For the consecration, in the anaphora, the sign of the Cross is made towards the Crosses of the altar (Liturgy of Addai and Mari – Brightman, 271); the same gesture is made several times during the fraction and consignation according to the anaphora of Saint James of the Syrian Jacobites (Brightman, 99). In the Liturgy of Addai and Mari, the hands of the priest are placed forming a Cross over the chalice (Brightman, 270) and he holds the paten in his left hand and the chalice in his right, forming thus a Cross (Brightman, 268).

[279] The rite of the commingling is done making a sign of the Cross in the Syrian Liturgy of St. James (Hammond, 80); immediately before communion the priest signs the body and blood with the Cross in the Anaphora of the Apostles of the Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites (Brightman, 194). The Liturgy of the Copts indicates that during the fraction, the priest marks the blood *in modum crucis gloriosae* [in the form of the glorious Cross], and the body is signed as well with a Cross (Hammond, 221, 227). Before the commixture the priest signs himself with the Cross, then signs the mysteries (*sacerdos signat cruce mysteria*), crosses his hands on his chest forming a Cross, and mixes the body and the blood in the form of a Cross, making then the sign of the Cross on his forehead and on the foreheads of the people (Hammond, 272, 276, 277, 278, 279), who approach communion crossing their hands as to form a Cross (Brightman, 573).

[280] See *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1354–1355.

[281] See Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1,6; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 1381.

[282] See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1,28; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon,* 1381.

[283] See Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 3,5; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1384.

[284] See Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* 64; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1354–1356.

[285] Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 266.

CONCLUSION

After surveying the body of patristic material on the Cross and the Eucharist, our study of the three early Roman sacramentaries has afforded us the opportunity for a more precise analysis of the sources of the Roman liturgy, allowing us to identify some of its foundational features. These fresh ideas and practices will be of great value when, in the final chapter of this book, we will bring them to bear on contemporary discussions.

By organizing the material according to themes we were able to identify certain main elements present in many of the prayers, which express the relevance of the *idea* of the Cross in the liturgical prayers of the Church. There is a fluid connection among and a unity of the different mysteries of our redemption that is harmoniously presented in the Eucharistic celebration. The gift of the Eucharist brings to the Church today the graces of the Cross; God expects our active response, as is seen in a common trait of the Roman collects: to pray for an effective response to the graces of the celebration.

Another rich theological theme found in the Roman sacramentaries is that of the wood of the Cross as the new tree from which we receive the fruit of the sacraments that lead to the new paradise. The new Adam offered the sacrifice of the Cross, the same sacrifice that is renewed in the sacrifice of the Eucharist. This sacrifice of praise is the offering of the holy Victim on the Eucharistic altar, where the visible and ineffable mysteries are celebrated.

The relation between the Cross and the Eucharist is particularly appreciated when the Cross becomes a liturgical *gesture*. In several instances the Cross is marked upon persons and objects, as the gesture that seals and communicates Christ's grace. The Cross becomes a necessary sign for sacramental efficacy, introducing those who are sealed into the new covenant of the Cross.

Many of these themes (e.g. the offering of the victim, the sacrifice of praise, the oblations of Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek, the altars of sacrifice) will be found again in the next section on the Roman Canon, the most sacred core of the Roman liturgy found in the sacramentaries – in the Gelasian and the Gregorian – which forms a unity with the prayers and prefaces contained in the same liturgical books.

2 THE ROMAN CANON

History and Text

The Roman sacramentaries are a precious source that contains the treasure of the liturgical prayers of the Church offered at the celebration of the Mass or in relation to it. At the core of this action, according to the Gelasian[286] and the Gregorian[287] sacramentaries, we find the Eucharistic prayer. The Eucharist is an action that is celebrated according to a certain "canon" (rule, direction). The Roman Eucharistic prayer (Roman Canon) preserved the idea of "canon" in its name, and several early sources attest to this usage.[288] By Roman Canon we understand a certain part of the Roman liturgy that contains the main parts of the Mass and can be seen in parallel to the Eastern anaphoras.[289] Being the most sacred part of the Eucharist, it is also "the most strongly and rigidly stylized," in contrast with the other prayers and prefaces contained in the sacramentaries, which, even after the period of improvisation, still varied according to the different celebrations.[290]

Although the exact details of the origin of the Roman Canon are not entirely clear, it is common to date it to the pontificate of Damasus (366–384), when Latin became the liturgical language of Rome.[291] Such a date is supported by patristic references or by quotations from the Roman Canon,[292] especially Ambrose's *De Sacramentis* [On the Sacraments] (ca. 390–392), surely the most significant source for the Canon in the fourth century.

[286] See Gelasian, 1242–1255. [287] See Gregorian, 3–16.

[288] See Anscar Chupungco, "Roman Canon," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, eds. Angelo di Berardino et al. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2014), I:414–415; Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:301–303.

[289] See Fernand Cabrol, "Canon," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, eds. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclerq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1913), II,2:1848. Dom Botte defines the *canon actionis* as "the Eucharistic prayer inasmuch as it is the rule upon which the sacrificial action must be accomplished." *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine: Édition Critique. Introduction et Notes*, ed. Dom Bernard Botte, OSB (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1935), 51.

[290] See Christine Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin: Its Origins and Character* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 61.

[291] See G. G. Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy to the Death of Pope Gregory the Great* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1994), 22; Cipriano Vagaggini, *The Canon of the Roman Mass and Liturgical Reform* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), 28.

[292] See Chupungco, "Roman Canon," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, I:415.

The pontificate of Gregory the Great (590–604) marks another important period in the development of the Canon, with some sections probably added during that time.[293] It is from this time forward that the grounds for studying the history of the text of the Canon are more solid. From approximately the year 700, the Roman Canon has remained fairly uniform.[294]

The version contained in the Gelasian sacramentary is perhaps the most ancient witness of the Canon as we know it today.[295] Its oldest core probably coincides with the portion quoted by Ambrose in *De Sacramentis*, that is, the sections beginning *Quam oblationem, Qui pridie, Unde et memores, Supra quae* and the first part of *Supplices te rogamus*.[296] The variable parts of the Canon were probably written in the fifth and sixth centuries.[297]

Certainly, the Roman Canon did not suddenly appear in Rome during the fourth century; the parallels with other anaphoras, including Greek prayers, seem to indicate the existence of earlier, common roots.[298] The study of the early witnesses of the text is complex and has been thoroughly examined by Dom Bernard Botte[299] and Edmund Bishop.[300] Efforts to reconstruct the parts and the development of the Canon seem, however, always to fall into the realm of conjecture.[301]

The structure of the Roman Canon as we have it today, introduced by the Preface and *Sanctus* [Holy], is as follows:

- *Te igitur* [To you, therefore]: prayer of intercession
- *Memento* [Remember, Lord, your servants]: prayer for the living

[293] See Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 38.
[294] See G. G. Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1968), 121.
[295] See *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 16.
[296] Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 38.
[297] See Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 22.
[298] See Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer*, 66. For a comparison between the Roman Canon and the so-called anaphora of Hippolytus, see Walter Howard Frere, *The Anaphora or Great Eucharistic Prayer: An Eirenical Study in Liturgical History* (London: SPCK, 1938), 134–141.
[299] See *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 11–21.
[300] See Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 77–115.
[301] For a summary of different hypothetical reconstructions of the Canon, see Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2012), 138–171; and Cabrol, "Canon," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, II,2:1868–1898.

- *Communicantes* [In communion]: prayer of intercession with the saints
- *Hanc igitur* [Therefore, Lord, we pray] and *Quam oblationem* [Be pleased, O God, we pray]: prayer for the acceptance of the offering
- *Qui pridie* [On the day before He was to suffer]: narration of the institution of the Eucharist
- *Unde et memores* [Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate]: anamnesis
- *Supra quae* [Be pleased to look upon these offerings]; and *Supplices* [In humble prayer]: prayers for sanctification
- *Memento* [Remember also, Lord, your servants]: prayer for the dead
- *Nobis quoque* [To us, also, your servants]: prayer for fellowship with the saints
- *Per quem haec omnia* [Through whom you continue to make]: concluding prayers.

The text of the Canon has other distinct characteristics that ought to be mentioned. First, it shows the presence of certain fixed elements, similar to Eastern anaphoras, combined with a variability of texts, which Bouyer suggests are a possible survival of earlier improvisation in the celebration of the Mass.[302] Second, woven into the text are words from Scripture and the liturgical tradition.[303] Finally, in regard to the style of the text, it has the rhythm and language of pre-fourth century Roman discourse,[304] and it combines two elements that might appear contradictory: a "monumental verbosity coupled with juridical precision."[305] Indeed, we find in the Canon several adjectives placed as consecutive synonyms, adding solemnity to the words of the prayer and making it rhetorically more effective.[306]

[302] See Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 229.

[303] This intermingling of human and divine words was seen as a "scandal" for the reformers of the sixteenth century. See Virgil Fiala, OSB, "Le Genre Littéraire du Canon Romain," in Semaine Liturgique de l'Institut Saint-Serge, *Eucharisties D'Orient et D'Occident* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970), 119.

[304] See Chupungco, "Roman Canon," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, I:415.

[305] Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 68.

[306] See Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer*, 79. For further analysis of the style and language of the Canon in comparison with the Roman orations, see Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 61–77.

Themes of the Cross and the Eucharist in the Roman Canon

The Roman Canon, because of its relevance as the earliest evidence of the Eucharistic prayer in Rome,[307] is a source of the greatest value in any effort to grasp the essential elements of the Roman Mass. As in previous sections, some themes will be identified as keys for understanding the message contained in the Canon. Therefore, this section will not be a detailed commentary on all the parts of the Roman Canon,[308] nor on the historical elements of its parts, but a short analysis of certain important themes of the Canon, taken as a meaningful unity.[309] In these themes the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist as an idea will unfold.

The Holy Sacrifice of Praise

A central theme of the Roman Canon is the idea of sacrifice, which appears in two ways throughout the text. First, we find a more "passive" view of sacrifice as a gift. At the beginning of the Canon the Church asks God to "accept and bless these gifts [*dona*], these offerings [*munera*], these holy and unblemished sacrifices [*sacrificia*]." As already noted, the Canon frequently presents groups of very similar words in solemn and effective expressions, and this could be an example of such a rhetorical device. However, there are some Scriptural, patristic, and liturgical parallels that might also suggest an intentional distinction of words. In the Letter to the Hebrews, for example, we find in three instances (5:1; 8:3; 9:1) the combination "gifts and sacrifices" [*dona et sacrificia*; or *munera et hostias*; in Greek it is always *prosphoras* and *thusias*] to describe what every high priest is appointed to offer. Later, Irenaeus of Lyon (+ ca. 200) writes: "Now the gifts, oblations, and all the sacrifices, did the people receive in

[307] The many unanswered questions and uncertainties about the value and authorship of the anaphora of the so-called "Apostolic Tradition" suggest excluding it from this study. See Manlio Simonetti, "Hippolytus," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, II:246.

[308] For commentaries on the different sections of the Roman Canon, see Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:314–380; Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 38–53. For references to ancient sources parallel to the words of the Canon, see *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 30–50; and *Canon Missae Romanae*, ed. Leo Eizenhofer, OSB (Roma: Casa Editrice Herder, 1966).

[309] We assume the Canon as a unity believing that, aside from some difficulties, it forms "one great Eucharistic prayer . . . [that makes] a satisfying unit." Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 133. This view is in clear contrast to the severe criticisms of the Canon expressed by Vagaggini, who writes of its agglomeration of features with no unity, its lack of logical connection of ideas, etc. See Vagaggini, *The Canon of the Roman Mass and Liturgical Reform*, 90–96. We will come back to Vagaggini´s views in Chapter III.

a figure."[310] Also, Peterson[311] points out that the anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Mark presents a threefold division: *thusías, prosphorás, euxaristhéria*,[312] which appears backwards in regard to the Roman Canon. *Euxaristhéria* [*dona*] refers to the offerings for the dead, *prosphorás* [*munera*] indicates the offerings for the living, and *thusías* [*sacrificia*], the offerings used immediately for the sacrifice.[313] Finally, Righetti mentions Le Brun's explanation that *dona* indicates what a superior gives to someone inferior, while *munera* that which an inferior gives to a superior. According to this idea, the bread and wine are God's gifts to us, and our offerings to Him.[314]

It is in this sense, as a gift, that the idea of sacrifice appears again after the Institution Narrative in the very early – likely from the second century[315] – reference to the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek: "the gifts [*munera*] of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice [*sacrificium*] of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering [*quod tibi obtulit*] of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice [*sanctum sacrificium*], a spotless victim." These pre-Mosaic Old Testament types of the Eucharist, already seen in the New Testament as pre-figurations of the sacrifice of Christ (cf. Heb 7:1–28),[316] are all images of a gift that is offered and accepted as a precious sacrifice fulfilled in the Eucharist. We can see this in the fifth-century mosaic of *Santa Maria Maggiore* in Rome and the sixth-century mosaics of *San Vitale* and *Sant'Apollinare Nuovo* in Ravenna.[317]

Sacrifice also appears in the Roman Canon as an action. In the *Memento* of the living, the priest prays for those for whom "we offer you this sacrifice of praise [*sacrificium laudis*]."[318] In Hebrews 13:15 we

[310] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses* IV,19,1. Munera autem et oblationes et sacrificia omnia in typo populus accepit. Cited in *Canon Missae Romanae*, 46.

[311] See Eric Peterson, "Dona, munera, sacrificia," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 46 (1932): 75–77.

[312] Τὰς θυσίας, τὰς προσφορὰς, τὰ εὐχαριστήρια. *Liturgies: Eastern and Western*, ed. F. E. Brightman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 129.

[313] See *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 53. Botte also mentions Brinktrine's explanation based on *Ordo Romanus* I and the mention of *oblatas tres*, but calls it "perhaps a little too subtle."

[314] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:328.

[315] See Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 51. See also Gelasian, 20.

[316] See Albert Vanhoye, *A Different Priest: The Letter to the Hebrews* (Miami: Convivium Press, 2011), 197–221.

[317] See Henri Leclerq, "Melchisédech," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, XI,1:236–237.

[318] For occurrences of *sacrificum laudis* in the Roman sacramentaries, see Chapter II, §1.2.4.

read: "Through him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God." Consequently, the action of the Mass is significantly qualified: the prayer itself is a sacrifice, and one of praise. Therefore, the Canon highlights "the Eucharistic character of the Mass,"[319] thus connecting "the duty of thanksgiving with the sacrifice of praise."[320] There is no contradiction between the idea of thanksgiving and the idea of sacrifice: rather than seeing here a tension between the two, or an arbitrary temporal succession of emphases, we can appreciate the unity of these two essential aspects of the Mass: the thanksgiving is a sacrifice.[321] Specifically, the Eucharist is, in the words of Joseph Ratzinger, a "verbal sacrifice" in which the action is not the transfer of property but the "self-offering of mind and heart;" this is why the Canon "is an entering into the prayer of Jesus Christ," the *Logos*, who unites us to his own *oblatio rationabilis* [reasonable oblation].[322]

The Mass, and particularly the Roman Canon, is an act of thanksgiving for God's boundless blessings, and that action is a sacrifice that gives perfect praise to God, transforming the gifts of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The very act of thanksgiving is what transforms the elements: in the second century, Justin Martyr (*Apology* I, 65 and 67) and Irenaeus (*Against the Heretics* I, 13,2) wrote of the "eucharistized" bread and wine.

Here we find another concept that appeared in several of the eucholo-gical texts previously examined: the necessary and harmonious cooperation between divine and human action.[323] Everything comes from God and the Eucharist becomes the place where everything is given back to God: the bread and wine which represent God's manifold gifts become the body and blood of Jesus Christ; the Giver becomes the gift and our poor gift becomes the Giver of all riches. We give of what we receive: *de tuis donis ac datis* [from the gifts that you have given us].

The centrality of this theme is such that we could say that sacrifice is *the* theme of the Roman Canon, and all the other themes appear as connected and dependent on this one theme: God's gifts and action in the world,

[319] Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:332.
[320] Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 124.
[321] See Jungmann's reflections about "thanksgiving" and "sacrifice" in the Canon, in Josef A. Jungmann, *The Eucharistic Prayer: A Study of the Canon of the Mass* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1956), 36–38.
[322] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy," trans. Graham Harrison, in *Collected Works*, XI:302.
[323] See Chapter II, "The Response to the Gift of the Cross," 78–81.

particularly the sacrifice of the Cross; and the sacrifice of the Church, who receives the gifts from above and, from her poverty offers the gift of Christ himself, as she learns to offer herself to God and begs for the benefits of the sacrifice of praise.

The Offering of the Holy Victim

The sacrifice of praise of the Eucharist is the action of offering a victim. What kind of offering and what kind of victim? There are two offerings in the Roman Canon.[324] The first is the Church's offering of the gifts of bread and wine to God that happens before the words of consecration at the Institution Narrative. We ask God to "accept and bless" [*accepta habeas et benedicas*]; to "graciously accept" [*ut placatus accipias*]; and to "bless, acknowledge and approve" the offering, making it "spiritual and acceptable" [*in omnibus, quaesumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris*].

The second one is the offering of the consecrated gifts to the Father after the *Qui pridie*. The priest, on behalf of the Church, offers to the Father what is no longer bread and wine, but the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This offering to his "glorious majesty" of the gifts that he has given us [*offerimus praeclarae maiestati tuae de tuis donis ac datis*] is presented with the hope that God will "be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance" and that, therefore, He will "accept them" [*Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere*]. Furthermore, with this action the priest, on behalf of the Church, hopes for the "gifts [to] be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty" [*iube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinae maiestatis tuae*].

The offering of the unconsecrated gifts of bread and wine and of the consecrated gifts of Christ's body and blood, united by the Institution Narrative, form a theme that pervades the whole Canon, thus showing the centrality of the topic of offering.[325] The Eucharist is the Church's offering that responds to the gifts of God. Rightly, the priest prays for the

[324] See Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 42, 50.

[325] Vagaggini calls the centrality of the idea of offering in the Roman Canon "an exaggerated emphasis": "The Roman canon insists on it in an exaggerated and disorderly manner, with much useless repetition." Vagaggini, *The Canon of the Roman Mass and Liturgical Reform*, 96. Indeed, a modern approach that judges meaning and expression based on linear thinking will hardly find cohesion in the Canon. However, is this the right way of understanding a prayer with roots that are so ancient and a tradition so rich

acceptance of "this oblation of our service" [*oblationem servitutis nostrae*]. It is, indeed, the offering of the Church that, through the gift of the sacramental priesthood, gives to God what He has given us. We see here, again, the harmonious cooperation of divine and human action, the *commercium* that fills us "with every grace and heavenly blessing" [*omni benedictione caelesti et gratia repleamur*]: we become "co-offerers with Christ."[326]

As to the Victim that is offered we find that it is called "a pure Victim, a holy Victim, a spotless Victim" [*hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam*]. These solemn words are pronounced immediately after the Institution Narrative, during the *anamnesis* and are, therefore, part of the offering of the consecrated gifts to the Father. It is worth mentioning that the Canon unites in this paragraph the mysteries of the Passion, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, according to the traditional view of the unity of mysteries consistently expressed in the prayers of the Roman sacramentaries.[327]

The imperfect gift of the Church has become the perfect gift of God: the Victim offered by the Father on the Cross. Jesus Christ is the pure, holy, and spotless Victim offered as a sacrifice on the altar. There are two altars mentioned in the Roman Canon where the Victim is offered. First, there is the altar at which we participate and from which we receive the most holy Body and Blood of the Son of God [*ex ac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui Corpus et Sanguine sumpserimus*], that is, the altar of the Church on earth, the altars of the churches where the sacrifice is celebrated. From this altar the Victim offered by the Church is borne to "the altar on high" by the Father's holy Angel.[328] The Church offers the holy Victim of the Cross and the Father blesses the Church beyond any human

and organic as the Roman Canon? About this, Catherine Pickstock offers some penetrating insights: "Indeed, unlike the view of reality implicit within immanentist language and the power of its textual permanence, the recommencements and stammer of the liturgical text are supremely but ineffably 'ordered' through genuine mystery and transcendent 'distance', and are by no means devoid of cohesion, purpose, or genuine surprise." Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1988), 178. See Chapter II, "The Unity of Mysteries," 75–78. More on this will be said in Chapter III.

[326] Jungmann, *The Eucharistic Prayer*, 33.

[327] See Chapter II, "The Unity of Mysteries," 75–78.

[328] On some of the opinions on the identity of the "holy angel" as an angel, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, see Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 2012), II:233.

merit. The idea of offering is, indeed, at the core of the ancient Eucharistic prayer of the Roman Church.

The Centrality of the Passion

The crucial point of the Mass, and not only for the Roman liturgy, is the Narrative of the Institution of the Eucharist, the most sacred and solemn moment of the whole celebration.[329]

This seems to be the oldest core of the Roman Canon.[330] Its important words are remarkable for their "apostolic form"[331]: some argue that they might even go back to a tradition that precedes the formation of the New Testament.[332] In any case, the Roman Institution Narrative is deeply scriptural, being particularly close to the Matthean text and the Pauline narrative, with a few additions that come largely from biblical texts, enhancing the vividness of the Narrative without losing the sobriety proper to the Roman style.[333]

Furthermore, the Roman Institution Narrative is clearly connected with the whole mystery of Christ's Passion, and not just with the Last Supper as a self-standing event. Unlike the Eastern Institution Narratives that begin with the phrase "in the night in which he was betrayed" (1 Cor 11:23), the Roman Canon opens this section with the words "on the day before he was to suffer" [*qui pridie quam pateretur*]. Willis posits that this simple phrase has a profound theological significance: it connects the Eucharist with the Passion as a whole and not only with the specific event of the betrayal: "In connecting the Mass with the Passion in general, the whole Roman Narrative is related to the thought of St. Cyprian in *Ep* LXIII and it represents the close connection seen in that Epistle between the Supper, the Passion and the mass, which St. Cyprian regards as three closely related parts of the unique sacrifice by which Christ redeemed the world."[334] In harmony with patristic tradition and the euchological texts of the Roman sacramentaries, the Roman Canon presents the mystery of

[329] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:349.
[330] See Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 45.
[331] See Fernand Cabrol, "Messe," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, X:II:1396.
[332] See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, II:195; Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Lit*urgica, III:352.
[333] See E. C. Ratcliff, "The Institution Narrative of the Roman *Canon Missae*: Its Beginnings and Early Background," in *E. C. Ratcliff: Liturgical Studies*, eds. A. H. Couratin and D. H. Tripp (London: SPCK, 1976), 51.
[334] Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy*, 47.

the Eucharist as an "act" of the unfolding of the mystery of salvation obtained through the sacrifice of the Cross.

Certain other elements of the Institution Narrative of the Roman Eucharistic prayer show the emphasis of a strong sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist in connection with the Passion. For example, the Narrative has Jesus lifting up his eyes to heaven [*elevatis oculis in caelum*], a gesture described prior to the multiplication of the loaves (Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41: Lk 9:16) and during Jesus' priestly prayer in the context of his Passion (Jn 17:1). This gesture becomes, for the priest, a liturgical gesture "proper of sacrifice."[335] Similarly, the mention of Jesus saying the blessing [*benedixit*] over the bread before breaking it possibly refers to an already established liturgical custom of making the sign of the Cross over the offerings.[336]

Another example of the sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist in connection with the Passion is the reference to "this precious chalice" [*hunc praeclarum calicem*], an echo of Psalm 22:5, which not only emphasizes the sacrificial offering of the chalice, but the fact that the chalice used at each Mass is, sacramentally, the chalice of the Lord's blood, poured at the Last Supper, shed at the Cross. This identification between the celebration of each Eucharist and the action of Christ in the Institution is an essential aspect of the very character of the Roman Institution Narrative, which, as Ratcliff indicates, connects the liturgical action of the Church with the action of Christ himself:

> For the function of the Narrative in the Canon is not merely to revive the memory of a significant historic event, or to provide a rationale for the celebration of the Eucharist, as the Greek Narratives do; its function is rather to make the significant historic event continuously present and operative. By means of the Narrative, therefore, the Church's action in the Eucharist is identified with, and becomes, the action of Christ in the Institution.[337]

Indeed, the Narrative itself "ensures that the eucharistic *actio* will be at one and the same time a true representation of the Institution and a true fulfillment of it, and accordingly a true offering of the *sacrificium novum*

[335] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, III:351. For further commentary and background on this gesture, see Bernard Botte, "'Et Elevatis Oculis in Caelis': Étude sur les récites liturgiques de la dernière cène," in Conférences Saint-Serge XXIV Semaine d'Études Liturgiques, *Gestes et Paroles dans les Diverses Familles Liturgiques* (Roma: Centro Liturgico Vincenziano, 1978), 77–79.

[336] See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, II:196. See also pages 54–58, 99–103, 118–121.

[337] E. C. Ratcliff, "The Institution Narrative," 62.

[new sacrifice]."[338] In this same sense, the expression *mysterium fidei* [the mystery of faith], loaded with the Pauline vision of mystery, does not refer in the Institution Narrative to an abstract idea but to an action: "The mystery of faith is what continues the mystery of the redemptive passion. The Eucharistic celebration is the manner of rendering present to all generations the unique sacrifice of Christ."[339]

Eventually the Cross became present in other non-textual ways throughout the Canon, indicating the growing awareness of the intimate connection between the sacrifice of the Passion and the offering of the Eucharist: several signs of the Cross were made during the recitation of the Eucharistic prayer, as indicated in the text of the Gelasian and in *Ordo* VII from 750 to 800, which will be studied in the next section; and in the T of the *Te igitur*, at the opening of the Canon, that became a depiction of the crucifixion in illustrated manuscripts between the eighth and tenth centuries.[340]

CONCLUSION

The Roman Canon shows a continuity of ideas with the patristic literature reviewed in previous sections. The Eucharist is understood as a sacrificial gift and action that gives praise to God, a holy and unblemished sacrifice that fulfills all prefigurations of this definitive oblation. Similarly, the idea of an offering that is presented and accepted is found across the Canon: the offering of the holy Victim of the Cross, Jesus Christ. In this offering the infinite goodness of God elicits the limited response of his Church and through this exchange and cooperation, gives to the world every gift and blessing. Finally, at the core of the Canon, the Institution Narrative highlights the centrality of the Passion in the Roman understanding of the Eucharist, which is seen as a continuation and fufillment of the Cross, an action of the Church that is, truly, Christ's own action initiated at the Last Supper. These emphases will be found as well in the ritual texts of the *Ordines Romani*.

[338] Ibid., 63.

[339] Botte, "Et Elevatis Oculis in Caelis," 83. See also Cassiodorus, *Expositio in 1 Tim 3,9*: "It is the mystery of faith, for the passion of Christ is the remedy for the salvation of mankind" (PL 68,665).

[340] See Jean Baptiste Etienne Pascal, *Origines et Raison de La Liturgie Catholique, en forme de Dictionnaire* (Paris: Petit-Montoruge, 1844), 458; Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 122.

3 THE ORDINES ROMANI

History and Text

The presence of the Cross in the Eucharist – as a central idea, a constant liturgical gesture, and a physical object – first seen in an extensive body of patristic literature and then studied in the Roman sacramentaries – including the Roman Canon – is also found in the analysis of another liturgical source of decisive importance for the understanding of the early liturgical life of the Roman rite: the *Ordines Romani* [Roman Orders].

These short texts are a sort of directory or guide for the celebrant and ministers of the liturgical rites, setting forth a detailed and necessary exposition of ceremonies that would have been practically impossible to perform using only the texts of the sacramentaries, to which the *Ordines* eventually became supplements.[341] They presented simple descriptions indicating the order of the ritual acts of the main liturgical ceremonies: Mass, Baptism, Ordinations, Dedications of churches, Offices of Holy Week, and other great feasts.[342]

There are approximately 107 manuscripts of the *Ordines*.[343] From the existing editions we could single out as especially noteworthy those prepared by Hittorp, Mabillon, Martène and Duchesne,[344] but the most important critical edition is the monumental work of Michel Andrieu, which contains 50 *Ordines*, sorted, dated, and localized based on the oldest manuscripts.[345] The most significant of all documents is *Ordo Romanus Primus* [First Roman Order], where a detailed explanation of the stational Papal Mass is provided, probably being a substantial representation of the rites of the Mass at the time of Pope Gregory the Great, although its final redaction comes from the eighth century.[346]

[341] See V. Saxer and S. Heid, "Ordines Romani," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, eds. Angelo Di Berardino et al. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2014), II:976; Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (Portland, Ore.: Pastoral Press, 1986), 135.

[342] See Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge* (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1965), I:v.

[343] For a thorough description of the manuscripts see Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, I:29–464.

[344] For a brief review of the different editions prior to Andrieu's, see Henri Leclerq, "*Ordines Romani*," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, eds. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclerq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané Editeurs, 1936), XII,2: 2402–2404.

[345] See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, vols. I–V.

[346] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, I:272.

The word *ordo* had a general use, meaning an "arrangement" or "disposition." It also referred sometimes to the clergy (as *plebs* indicated the laity), and in some cases it meant the Eucharistic prayer. It was after Gregory the Great – i.e., after the time of liturgical improvisation – that the term *ordo* came to be used as a description of liturgical rites.[347]

These brief documents were originally separate booklets composed for the different ceremonies and gathered in collections – of a more liturgical, didactic, or juridical character – between the sixth and seventh centuries.[348] They have only survived in such collections, certainly compiled after they migrated from Rome towards French and German territories. Therefore, from the viewpoint of paleography, all the *Ordines* are Frankish or mixed (Romano-Frankish or Romano-German).[349]

The decisive importance of the *Ordines* comes from the fact that they offer more detailed information about the rubrics of that time than the sacramentaries do, and thus are an indispensable source for a reconstruction of the ceremonies, and precious evidence of the early organization of the liturgical life of the Roman Church.[350] Indeed, the *Ordines* were liturgical documents in the strict sense, composed and copied for actual liturgical use; they were functional texts, reserved for the use of ministers and masters of ceremonies. For this reason, any sacramental theology truly rooted in the foundational practices of the early Roman Church has to pay careful attention to the *Ordines Romani*, for the rites described in them communicate the understanding of the nature of the sacraments at the end of the patristic period and the beginning of the medieval era.

Themes of the Cross and the Eucharist in the *Ordines Romani*

Following the same methodology of the previous sections, we will take certain important themes as keys for organizing the material of the *Ordines*, from which we have selected only those documents about the celebration of the Mass or of ceremonies related to or grafted onto the Eucharist, such as Baptism, Dedication of churches, and the celebration of Holy Week. In all cases, in order to remain within the limits of the

[347] See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 135–136.
[348] See Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 177.
[349] See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 137–139.
[350] See Leclerq, "Ordines Romani," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, XII,2:2402.

scope of the research, I have excluded texts from a non-Roman tradition, or from later than the eighth century. Therefore, our study includes the following *Ordines*:[351] I, II, III,[352] VII,[353] XI, XXIII,[354] and XLII. In the following themes, according to the practical-ritual character of the *Ordines*, the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist will be expressed as a gesture and as an object.

Signing with the Cross

The idea of signing with the Cross [*faciens crucem, consignare, signare*] appears repeatedly in different contexts and ceremonies in the *Ordines*. We will review three instances in which this gesture is made: over the offerings at Mass, over the altar of sacrifice, and over the people.

The Sign of the Cross over the Offerings The First Roman Order mentions three moments at which a Cross is made over the offerings during the Papal Mass. First, at the offertory, the deacon pours the wine into the chalice making a sign of the Cross: "Then the subdeacon comes down, following in the choir, he receives the cruet from the hand of the fourth in rank in the *schola* and he gives it to the archdeacon, who pours it into the chalice as he makes the sign of the Cross."[355] The Cross is also made after the Institution Narrative, at the sign of peace, as the Pope introduces the consecrated body of the Lord into the chalice: "When he says, 'may the peace of the Lord be always with you', making the sign of the Cross three times with his hand over the chalice, he puts the *Sancta* [the consecrated bread] into it."[356] Finally, during the communion rite, the Pontiff makes

[351] This selection is based on the systematic and chronological classification offered by Vogel, according to Andrieu's numbering. See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 191–194.

[352] In the case of *Ordo* III, which Vogel qualifies as a "Frankish supplement," we follow Andrieu's indication that it is "evidently of Roman origin." See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, I:124.

[353] *Ordo* VII is of Frankish origin, but written by a "Romanist rubricist." Because of its Roman character and especially due to the relevance of its subject for our topic, I will include it in our study. See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, I:124, 282–291.

[354] *Ordo* XXIII appears to be the work of a liturgist-pilgrim from Germany who describes the Papal ceremonies of Holy Week. Although some of the terms used have a Frankish flavor, it is a precious testimony of the Roman rites of the Easter Triduum.

[355] All the English texts of the *Ordines* are based on the translation provided by Professor Fred Fraser. The Latin texts are taken from the edition of Michel Andrieu. Henceforth, we will quote the number of the *Ordo* and the paragraph. In this case, *Ordo* I, 80.

[356] *Ordo* I, 95.

the sign of the Cross three times as he "puts a very small piece of what he has bitten into the chalice."[357]

In Masses in which cardinals concelebrate with the Pope (Easter, Pentecost, Nativity, and the solemnity of Saint Peter), although the concelebrants surround the altar and "simultaneously consecrate the body and blood of the Lord," it is, however, "only the celebrant [who] makes the sign of the Cross above the altar to his right and left":[358] the Pope, presiding in the person of Christ, is the only one who makes the sign of the Cross. Also, in Masses not celebrated by the Pope, the bishop presiding, in receiving the particle of bread previously consecrated by the *Domnus Apostolicus* [Lord Apostolic, i.e., the Pope], "makes the sign of the Cross thrice and says 'may the peace of the Lord be always with you' and puts it into the chalice."[359] This is reminiscent of the rite of the *fermentum* [ferment]: a Roman tradition in which a piece of bread consecrated by the Pope was taken to the titular churches of Rome as a sign of communion. All the Masses celebrated in the City were united with the Eucharist celebrated by the Pope, and the particle consecrated by the Pontiff was mingled with the local sacrifices through the sign of the Cross.[360]

At the recitation of the Canon, the Cross is also signed over the offerings, as indicated in *Ordo* VII, written by a Frankish liturgist using the texts of *Ordo Romanus Primus* and the Gelasian sacramentary, around the middle of the eighth century, with the intention of spreading the Roman rite.[361] During the *Te igitur* [To you, therefore] we read: "At this point, he marks with the sign of the Cross the offering [i.e. the bread] and the chalice three times; the offering and the chalice, however, do not come under one Cross, but the priest makes the sign of the Cross three times over the offering and three times over the chalice."[362] At the *Quam oblationem* [Be pleased, o God, we pray] the celebrant blesses [by

[357] *Ordo* I, 107. The rite of introducing the consecrated bread into the chalice making the sign of the Cross three times is found also in *Ordo* III, 3, and *Ordo* VII, 23.

[358] *Ordo* III, 1. [359] *Ordo* II, 6.

[360] On the *fermentum*, the most relevant testimony is Pope Innocent's letter to Decentius: "The presbyters of these churches . . . receive from the acolytes the *fermentum* that we consecrated, so that they do not find themselves separated from our communion on that great day." In Martin F. Connell, *Church and Worship in Fifth-Century Rome: The Letter of Innocent I to Decentius of Gubbio,* text with introduction, translation and notes (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2002), 39. See also Antoine Chavasse, *La Liturgie de la Ville de Rome du V au VIII siècle* (Roma: Centro Studi S. Anselmo, 1993), 25, 64–66.

[361] See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, I:289–291. [362] *Ordo* VII, 6.

marking with the sign of the Cross], first only the offering, and then the offering and the chalice, "so that they may become the body and blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."[363] After the Institution Narrative, as the presider says the *Unde et memores* [Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate] remembering the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, "he seals the offering alone with the sign of the Cross four times, making a fifth Cross over the chalice alone: 'a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim, the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation.'"[364] After this, while the celebrant prays "through whom you make all these good things, O Lord," "he signs both things, i.e., the offering and the chalice, making the sign of the Cross three times over the offering and three times over the chalice," and finishes the prayer: "you sanctify them, fill them with life, bless them and bestow them upon us."[365] Finally, during the communion rite the Cross is also sealed upon the chalice: "And when the breaking has been completed, when the Lord Apostolic takes communion, he bites a part for himself and he puts the remainder into the chalice, making the sign of the Cross with it three times over the chalice, saying nothing."[366]

It is plain that the Cross is a central gesture performed numerous times during the recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer. It seems manifest that the centrality of the Cross in the celebration of the Mass was a dominant emphasis of the Roman liturgy towards the end of the patristic era and the beginning of the Middle Ages. Another significant testimony of this fact comes from a Papal letter written in 751 addressing certain questions around this practice. Pope Zachary (679–752) wrote to Boniface (ca. 675–754), missionary to the German peoples, responding to his inquiries about the signs of the Cross to be made during the Canon: "You ask us, most holy brother, to inform Your Holiness where the sign of the Cross should be made during the recitation of the holy canon. In compliance with your request we have marked in the roll which we have given to your pious priest Lullus the places where the sign of the Cross is to be made."[367] From this account, it appears that it was not universally customary to mark in the text the places where the Cross was to be made, and also that there were some differences in practice. In fact, if we compare *Ordo* VII

[363] *Ordo* VII, 10. [364] *Ordo* VII, 13. [365] *Ordo* VII, 18. [366] *Ordo* VII, 23.

[367] *Letter* LXXI [87], Pope Zacharias replies to the inquiries of Boniface (November 4, 751). In *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. Ephraim Emerton, with a new introduction and bibliography by Thomas F. X. Noble (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 142. See also Ernest Dümmler, *Epistolae merowingici et karolini aevi* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), I:372.

with the text of the Gelasian sacramentary,[368] we find a significant variance: while the Gelasian indicates only five crosses to be made, *Ordo* VII mentions twenty-five. Furthermore, all the crosses made according to the Gelasian Canon were made during the *Te igitur*, that is, before the Institution Narrative, during a prayer that asks God to accept and bless the offerings. *Ordo* VII includes several crosses to be made after the Institution Narrative. Although there seems to "be no doubt that the original meaning of this sign was benedictory,"[369] the fact that it is made upon the already consecrated elements presents a difficulty of no simple solution.[370] Perhaps a reasonable conclusion would regard the indications of the Gelasian as more foundational, and the added gestures specified in *Ordo* VII as an attempt to emphasize even more the connection of the Eucharist with the Passion. This change appears to signal a transition from the original benedictory and performative meaning of the sign of the Cross (in the context of the Eucharistic action) to a more devotional approach.[371]

Signing the Place of the Sacrifice The sign of the Cross seals the bread and wine, blessing them for the sacrifice. Naturally, the altar where the sacrifice will be renewed is also blessed and consecrated with the sign of the Cross.

Ordo XLII explains the rite of the deposition of relics, part of the ceremony of the dedication of churches, which, in central Italy and the nearby islands was, from early times, exclusively reserved for the Pope or required at least the permission of the Apostolic See.[372] The Cross richly filled the dedication rituals. After the bishop "baptizes" the altar with blessed water,[373] the relics of saints are brought forth to the altar. "And before they are enclosed, he [the bishop] places chrism within while

[368] See Gelasian, 1244. The Gregorian contains sixteen signs of the Cross for the Canon. See Gregorian, 5–15.

[369] See Ernest Beresford-Cooke, *The Sign of the Cross in the Western Liturgies* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), 13.

[370] For a synthesis of attempts to explain the meaning of these signs of the Cross by scholars around the time of the Second Vatican Council, see Matthew S. Ernest, "The Postconciliar Reform of the Sign of the Cross and the Imposition of Hands over the Gifts in the Roman Canon," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 127 (2013): 286–287.

[371] Later, St. Thomas Aquinas will explain this custom saying: "After the consecration, the priest makes the sign of the cross, not for the purpose of blessing and consecrating, but only for calling to mind the virtue of the cross." In that same text, Thomas offers the traditional symbolic interpretations of all the signs of the Cross made during the Canon. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, 83, 5 (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 2516.

[372] See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, IV:359.

[373] *Ordo* XLII, 6.

making the sign of the Cross at the four corners of the enclosure in the confession [*confessio*] of faith, speaking thus: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you'. He [the acolyte] responds: 'and with your spirit.'"[374] Then the relics are placed inside the *confessio*, a cavity in the altar for the placement of relics,[375] along with three fragments of consecrated bread and three grains of incense.[376] Subsequently the plaque that closes the *confessio* is "confirmed" through a cruciform anointing with holy chrism: "For the tablet itself, which he places over the relics, ought to be confirmed [*confirmari*] with the chrism, while he makes the sign of the Cross,"[377] and also rubbed with lime as the sign of the Cross is made above it with the chrism.[378] Afterwards, the altar is sealed with the Cross made with the chrism: "And he [the bishop] likewise makes the sign of the Cross with the chrism above and at the four corners of the altar."[379] Lastly, the altar is veiled, the church is sprinkled with blessed water,[380] and the Mass and octave begin.

The Roman altar was sealed five times with the Cross.[381] Although the symbolism of the number is not explained in the *Ordo*,[382] there is a suggestive parallel with the five signs of the Cross made during the Canon according to the Gelasian sacramentary, especially as *Ordo* XLII is purely Roman and older than *Ordo* VII, which supposes the existence of an eighth-century Gelasian. These two old Roman sources prescribe making the Cross five times, both for the blessing of the altar and for the blessing of the Eucharistic elements to be consecrated. This fact reinforces the impression that the five crosses seem to be the original Roman benedictory practice and that the subsequent crosses, particularly those made

[374] *Ordo* XLII, 10.

[375] See Henri Leclerq, "Confessio," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, II,2: 2503–2508.

[376] Since at least the time of Gregory the Great, the relics were placed beneath or inside the altar. See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, IV: 375. For patristic texts related to this practice, see Chapter I, 58–59.

[377] *Ordo* XLII, 18. [378] *Ordo* XLII, 14. [379] *Ordo* XLII, 15.

[380] *Ordo* XLI, of Frankish origin, specifies that the sprinkling is done "continually making the sign of the Cross, even if he should sprinkle the whole floor."

[381] See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, IV: 387.

[382] The number five is certainly reminiscent of the five wounds of Christ, which became a widespread devotion in the Middle Ages, especially through the Mass in honor of Christ's wounds, known as the "Golden Mass," which was believed to have been composed by John the Evangelist and revealed to Pope Boniface II in 532. See Adolph Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Liturgie und des religiösen Volkslebens* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagsbuschhandlung, 1902), 157–160.

upon the already consecrated offerings are later, perhaps of Frankish origin, and devoid of the original sense of an effective blessing present in the patristic tradition and in the earlier practice attested in the Gelasian.

Another striking aspect of the rite of blessing the altar is the evident parallel with the rites of Christian initiation: the altar is baptized with water, confirmed with chrism, and consecrated with the Eucharist, both present in the *confessio* next to the relics and the incense, and later celebrated on the altar, as the culmination of the initiation. Just as in the case of neophytes the Cross is present in all the sacraments of the process of initiation, so in the case of the altar, the Cross is the way in which the steps of the ritual of blessing and deposition of relics are fulfilled.

The Sign of the Cross Made Upon People The Cross is also sealed upon people. In *Ordo Romanus Primus* we read that "the priest passes through into the head of the choir and bows his head towards the altar, rising <and praying> and making the sign of the Cross on his forehead, and he gives the sign of peace to one bishop."[383] The sign of the Cross offers the gift of peace and the blessing for the execution of liturgical services: "And that one goes to his shoulder, and he looks at the first member of the choir, making the sign of the Cross on his own forehead, he bows his head to him to say the *Glory to the Father*."[384]

The ceremonies of Baptism are permeated with the Cross, sealed upon the catechumens on several occasions, as we read in *Ordo* XI, from the seventh or sixth century. The Cross is marked on the forehead by the priest: "And then first have the priest make the sign of the Cross on the forehead of each individually with his thumb while saying 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"[385] The godparents too seal the Cross on the forehead of their godchildren: "Moreover the deacon says: 'Sign them. Proceed to the blessing.' And have their godfathers and godmothers sign those infants on their foreheads with their thumbs while saying: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"[386] The acolyte performs this same rite: "Then the acolyte comes, again making the sign of the Cross on the foreheads of each individually, while saying: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"[387]

[383] *Ordo* I, 49. [384] *Ordo* I, 122. [385] *Ordo* XI, 3.
[386] *Ordo* XI, 12. Also: *Ordo* XI, 17; and *Ordo* XI, 23.
[387] *Ordo* XI, 13. Also: *Ordo* XI, 18; and *Ordo* XI, 19.

The chrism is added to the water while making the sign of the Cross with it[388] and then the priest seals the head of the infants with the chrism: "But when they lift up the infants themselves in their hands, they offer them to a single priest. But the priest himself makes the sign of the Cross with the chrism with his thumb on the top of their head, while speaking thus: 'Almighty God, Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, etc.'"[389] Finally, the Cross is sealed again on the forehead with the holy chrism.[390]

The sealing of the Cross is accompanied with certain definite words that are an indication of the theological background of this sign. In several cases the invocation of the Holy Trinity is said as the Cross is marked.[391] The Cross is a confession of faith in God, who blesses his people and objects as his name is proclaimed. The blessing of God that comes through the Cross attains the gift of peace, another recurrent word pronounced as the Cross is made: *Pax domini sit semper vobiscum* [The peace of the Lord be with you always].[392] This peace communicates God's firm protection against Satan, who is exorcized through the sign of the Cross.[393] And, naturally, the Cross is signed as the Church confesses her awe and reverence towards "Almighty God,"[394] whose blessing is received as we pray[395] and bend our knees[396] in a sign of humility and devotion to the "eternal and most just piety"[397] of God.

The Celebration of the Cross

In the previous sections we have been able to see the multiform presence of the Cross in the Roman liturgy, particularly in the Eucharist. The Cross enjoys a prominent place as the carrier of God's blessing and protection, and when made upon people and objects it communicates God's consecrating power.[398] In this section we will study the Cross not as an instrument for the liturgical celebrations, but as an object of worship, as we review the ceremonies of Good Friday

[388] See *Ordo* XI, 94. [389] *Ordo* XI, 97.
[390] *Ordo* XI, 101. The Pope seals the newly baptized in the Easter celebration of Holy Saturday with the chrism, according to *Ordo* XXIII, 31.
[391] See *Ordo* XI, 3, 12, 13, 101; *Ordo* XLII, 10.
[392] See *Ordines* I, 95; II, 6; III, 3; XI, 101. [393] See *Ordo* XI, 18, 21, 84.
[394] *Ordo* XI, 97. [395] *Ordo* XI, 23. Also: *Ordo* XI, 17. [396] *Ordo* XI, 17.
[397] *Ordo* XI, 24.
[398] In addition to mentioning the gesture of making the Cross, *Ordo* I also indicates the presence of Cross-bearers (*cruces portantes*) for the Papal stational Mass. See *Ordo* I, 126.

according to *Ordo* XXIII, which was written by a pilgrim in Rome and succinctly describes the rites of the Roman Triduum in the eighth century.[399]

The Rites of Good Friday in Rome and Jerusalem before* Ordo *XXIII The description of the Roman rituals of Good Friday shows great sobriety, not only in regard to its redaction, but also in terms of the actual ceremonies. Here we find a contrast with the Jerusalem rituals.[400] The ancient celebration of Good Friday was very different in the East than in the West: in the former it was marked with splendor, and in the latter, with simplicity. In Rome, around the middle of the fifth century, the Good Friday service

[399] The most important feasts of the Cross are the celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday and the Exaltation of the Cross, both celebrated already in the fourth century in Jerusalem. However, there are some other celebrations of the Cross that appeared later in the East and are worth mentioning. On the third Sunday of Lent, a feast was celebrated to commemorate the return of the relic of the Cross that was captured by the Persians in AD 614 and recaptured by the emperor Heraclius around 628–631. On that day, the Cross was venerated, and in Jerusalem this veneration of the Cross on the third Sunday of Lent replaced the Good Friday adoration of the Cross. This feast began no earlier than the seventh century. March 6 marks another feast of the Cross, connected with the *translatio* of a relic of the *vera crux* to Constantinople, and centered on the recapture of the Cross by Heraclius, which was supposed to have happened on that date, for in 630 the third Sunday of Lent fell on March 6. On May 7 another celebration commemorated the miracle of the appearance of the Cross in the sky above Jerusalem that occurred in 351. Finally, a celebration on August 1 included a procession and veneration of the Cross, possibly related to a raging epidemic.

These feasts indicate a strong and widespread devotion to and cult of the Cross in the seventh century. Nevertheless, it was in the fourth century that a new stage in the history of the cult of the Cross was opened, due in part to a number of events that had a profound impact for Christians. The most important was the discovery of the true Cross by Saint Helena, ca. 325/328. Along with this epochal event, the victory of Constantine the Great over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge (312), and the vision of the Cross with the message *in hoc signo vinces* also were pivotal moments. The abolition of crucifixion as a method of execution was possibly another influence, and finally, the apparition of a Cross over Jerusalem on 351. See Louis van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross: Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 2–4. See also Robin M. Jensen, *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2017), 111–120.

[400] This significant difference of approaches originated, in Baumstark's opinion, in the "different spiritual outlooks of the two Apostles who presided over the early growth of the young Churches of Asia and Rome." For the Beloved Disciple, who was at the foot of the Cross, the memory of Good Friday was a triumphant one. For Saint Peter, that same day brought sad recollections of his bitter betrayal, favoring thus the memory of the glory of Sunday, when he was blessed with the experience of being one of the very first witnesses to Christ's victory. See Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 174.

consisted merely of readings and prayers.[401] By the end of the fifth century, this service was held in the Basilica of the Holy Cross, as a liturgical representation of the Holy City: this church is simply called *Hierusalmen* in *Ordo* XXIII,12. During the sixth century, we still find the same structure of readings followed by the solemn prayers. The rest of the day was dedicated to silent prayer and mourning, without any other service other than the office prayed only by the clergy.[402] Good Friday was, indeed, "the great day of mourning for the Church; the *dies amaritudinis* [Ambrose, Epist. XXIII, 12]."[403] This profound experience of sorrow for the sufferings and death of the Lord produced a strong imprint on the Church's piety. Because of this, as an expression of profound mourning this day was originally a-liturgical, as it was the case for all the Fridays and Saturdays of the year in Rome.[404] This a-liturgical character was observed unanimously both in the West and in the East,[405] and even when in "the sixth century the rigour of the ancient rule was somewhat relaxed and the Friday stations of Lent were instituted, the Popes still continued for many centuries the ancient Roman usage, which excluded even the Mass of the Presanctified on this day."[406]

The Eastern rituals of the Death of the Lord in Jerusalem were longer and more elaborate than the Roman ceremonies. They are described in detail in the Armenian Lectionary, probably from 460,[407] and a classic account of this rite is found in the memories of the pilgrim Egeria, from around 385.[408] It was a composite celebration that involved a pilgrimage to the actual sites of the Passion, along with long prayers, readings and, especially, with the adoration of the relic of the Cross found by Saint Helena.[409]

[401] See Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 262.

[402] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, II:171. [403] Ibid., 170.

[404] See Idelfonso Schuster, *The Sacramentary: Historical and Liturgical Notes on the Roman Missal* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1925), II:205.

[405] Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, II:170.

[406] Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, II:205.

[407] Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1958), 144.

[408] See *Egeria. Diary of a Pilgrimage*, trans. George E. Gingras (New York: Newman Press, 1970), 110–113.

[409] For a comprehensive study on the legend of the discovery see Barbara Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image*, trans. Lee Preedy (Leiden: Brill, 2004). For a synthesis of the legend of Helena and the finding of the Cross according to Gelasius of Cesarea, see Stephan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found: From Event to Mediaeval Legend*, with an appendix of texts (Stockholm:

Good Friday in Rome in the Eighth Century The most ancient description of the Roman celebration of Good Friday is found in the sixth century Wurzburg epistolary, which contains three lessons.[410] As to the Papal liturgy of Good Friday, the most ancient source is the Gregorian Sacramentary, where we find the solemn prayers of intercession said in the Basilica of the Holy Cross.[411] The Gelasian, for priestly celebrations, also included the adoration of the Cross and Eucharistic communion.[412] In *Ordo* XXIII we can find with more detail the ceremony as it became established for the Papal liturgy and, for the most part, for the Roman rite in general. There are not very many documents from earlier times. However, "the absence of ancient documents is compensated by monuments erected in honor of the Cross, and by the literary testimonies ... concerning the presence of this relic in the *urbs* [the City, i.e. Rome]."[413]

The Papal celebration began with a procession and ended with a second one at the eighth hour, when the Pope and other ministers processed barefoot[414] from the Lateran basilica to *Santa Croce* [Holy Cross], carrying the relic of the true Cross.[415] During the procession the Pope himself would carry the censer:

> And they will process forth down from Saint John while they sing the psalm. "Blessed are those whose ways are blameless" [*Beati immaculati*], while the archdeacon holds the left hand of the Lord Apostolic and while the celebrant himself carries in his right hand the thurible with its incense and while another deacon carries the wood of the precious Cross behind the Lord Apostolic in a repository adorned with gold and with gems: in very truth, the Cross itself has a repository of wood, which is precious moreover on account of the gold and gems, but it has its own hollow place within made from balsam that is sufficiently well fragrant.[416]

Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991), 54–55. For a short synthesis of St. Helena's life and a general view of the finding, see Michael Hesemann, *Testimoni del Golgota: Le Reliquie della Passione di Gesù* (Torino: San Paolo, 2003), 42–46.

[410] Bruno Leoni, *La Croce e il Suo Segno: Venerazione del Segno e Culto della Reliquia nell'antichità Cristiana* (Verona: Editrice SAT, 1968), 179.

[411] Gregorian, 338–355. See P. Jounel, "The Year," in *The Church at Prayer*, ed. A. G. Martimort (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1985), IV:49–50; Matías Augé, "The Liturgical Year in the Roman Rite," in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, ed. Anscar Chupungco (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 179–180.

[412] Gelasian, 395–418. [413] Bruno Leoni, *La Croce e il suo Segno*, 179.

[414] *Ordo* XXIII, 9.

[415] Probably the relic of Pope Symmachus that was lost and then found by Pope Sergius. See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, II:177.

[416] *Ordo* XXIII, 11.

In the time between the fourth and the seventh centuries, the Eastern celebration of Good Friday, especially the adoration of the Cross, passed to Constantinople and other places of the Byzantine Empire where relics of the true Cross were kept.[417] In the West, the devotion to the Cross was well known in the fifth century, when in Rome a relic of the Wood was moved from the Basilica of *Santa Croce* to an oratory in the Lateran by Pope Hilarius (461–468), and another taken by Pope Symmachus (498–514) to an *Oratorium Crucis* [Oratory of the Cross] next to Saint Peter. Righetti posits that it is in the first half of the seventh century that the adoration of the Cross was introduced in Rome.[418] The main argument in favor of this date is the evident Byzantine influence of the rites, particularly the fact that this is the only instance in the Western liturgy in which the Pope carries the censer (in the procession from the Lateran to the *Santa Croce*), whereas that was a common practice for bishops in the East. For these reasons it is believed that it was an Eastern Pope, Sergius I (687–701), who brought those rites to the Roman liturgy.[419]

After the procession, the Pope, ministers, and people enter the Basilica and the Pope adores the Cross: "And when they come to Jerusalem [i.e. the Basilica of the Holy Cross], they enter the church and the deacon places the very repository where there is a Cross on top of the altar and then the Lord Apostolic opens it. Then he prostrates himself before the altar for the prayer, and after he rises, he kisses it [the repository] and goes and stands by his chair."[420] The rites of Good Friday are pervaded with unique signs of humility: the Pope walks barefoot through the streets of Rome and then, after prostrating himself before the Cross, he kisses it in veneration. After this, the bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, and then the remainder of the people also venerate the relic with a kiss. This eloquent rite, "a solemn act of reparation,"[421] was prescribed originally for the veneration of the relic of the true Cross. However, when the Roman liturgy extended its influence outside the city, any Cross became a representation of the true Cross.

[417] See Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, II:214.

[418] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, II:176.

[419] See Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, II:215. Another hypothesis suggests that Pope Gregory III (731–741), of Syrian birth, was the one who introduced the rite of veneration of the Cross into the Roman liturgy, as part of his battle against iconoclasm. See Charles P. Esseman, *An Historical Study of the Ceremonies Found in the Roman Missal for the Friday of Holy Week* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1961), 45.

[420] *Ordo* XXIII, 12–13.

[421] Dom Prosper Gueránger, OSB, *The Liturgical Year: Passiontide and Holy Week* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications 2000), 486.

Ordo XXIII indicates that the lessons are to be read immediately after the Cross has been kissed by the Pope.[422] A reading from the prophet Hosea followed by the gradual *Domine audivi* [Lord I have heard] (Hab 3:2), and a reading from Deuteronomy followed by the tract *Qui habitat* [He who dwells] (Ps 91)[423] are heard before the deacon, barefoot, goes to the ambo and with two subdeacons reads the text of the Passion according to John. After this, the Pope opens the solemn intercessions, a practice that is reminiscent of the ancient prayer said before the offertory, attested already by Justin Martyr.[424] On Good Friday, the meaning of this rite was particularly profound: after participating with Christ in his redeeming suffering for the whole world, the Church prays for all those for whom Jesus gave his life. *Ordo* XXIII only mentions the first of these prayers (for the Holy Church of God), the invitations and response (let us kneel / let us stand) and the conclusion: *Dominus vobiscum / et cum spiritu tuo* [The Lord be with you / And with your spirit].[425] After this, the procession went back to the Lateran singing *Beati immaculati* [Blessed those whose ways are blameless] (Ps 119).[426]

The Sacrifice There is a remarkable instruction at the end of the Good Friday rites:

> Nevertheless, the Apostolic does not take holy communion there nor do the deacons. But he who wishes to take holy communion, takes it from the vessels of the sacrifice that was observed on the fifth day of the week [*Qui vero communicare voluerit, communicat de capsis de sacrificio quod V feria servatum est*]. And he who does not wish to take holy communion there, goes through other churches at Rome or through the titular cathedrals and takes holy communion.[427]

Two points are noteworthy. The first is the fact that the Papal celebration of Good Friday did not include holy communion. And yet, while the Pope and the deacons did not receive communion, it was possible for the people who wished to do so, to receive holy communion either at the Basilica of *Santa Croce* after the Papal rites or at another of the titular churches. Two reasons appear for this practice: first, the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified – a celebration in which communion was distributed without offering the sacrifice – was of Eastern origin and had been implemented in the titular churches of Rome, but in an effort to preserve the original Roman custom, had not been implemented in the properly Papal

[422] *Ordo* XXIII, 17. [423] *Ordo* XXIII, 18.
[424] See Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, II:173. [425] *Ordo* XXIII, 20.
[426] *Ordo* XXIII, 21. [427] *Ordo* XXIII, 22.

liturgies.[428] Second, the penitential and a-liturgical character of the rite probably saw abstinence from communion as a participation in the death of Christ.

The second point worth noting in the instruction about communion is that the already consecrated bread is referred to as "the sacrifice." This usage, which we have found also in patristic texts and in the Roman sacramentaries,[429] is significant, as it highlights the connection between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist. There is no need of any further words to describe or qualify the consecrated Eucharistic elements: they are, simply, "the holy sacrifice" that was kept from the celebration of Holy Thursday for the rite of communion of Good Friday.[430]

An essential connection between altar and sacrifice can be appreciated in this instruction from *Ordo* I:

> And, after the offerings have been removed from the altar, except for the small portion which is the celebrant's own offering, which had been broken, which the priest left upon the altar, since they take care such that while the solemnities of the Mass are being performed the altar is not separated from the sacrifice [*dum missarum solemnia peraguntur, altare sine sacrificio non sit*], the archdeacon looks into the choir and bows his head to them there to say the *Agnus Dei* and goes to the paten with the others.[431]

During the rite of communion at the Papal Mass, even when the consecrated offerings are being taken for their distribution, a portion of the consecrated bread is left upon the altar, ensuring that "the altar is not separated from the sacrifice." Altar and sacrifice are united by the offering of Christ, who, becoming present under the forms of bread and wine, is both the altar and the sacrifice.

CONCLUSION

The Roman Orders examined in this section show in numerous ways the presence of the Cross in the liturgical rites in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. These documents, being ceremonial instructions, show in a more concrete and well-defined manner the practical way in which the Cross marked Roman worship, particularly the Eucharist.

Because of the practical character of the *Ordines*, the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist is shown primarily as a liturgical *gesture*. The Cross

[428] See Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen âge*, III:272, footnote 20.
[429] See Chapter I, 42–53 and Chapter II, 85–89. [430] *Ordo* XXIII, 8. [431] *Ordo* I, 105.

was made over the altar where the sacrifice of the Cross is renewed; over the people who serve in the liturgical services or were to be initiated into the Christian faith; and, as seen in previous sections, over the Eucharistic elements, which were thereby blessed before their consecration.

The Cross was also seen, not only as necessary for performing the rituals, but as an *object* of devotion and liturgical veneration. The ceremonies of Holy Week are evidence, in continuity with earlier documents, that the Cross was regarded as the instrument of salvation, thus worthy of honor as the center of the rich rites of Good Friday. On that day, the Pope and the whole Church kneel and kiss the holy Cross, in a spirit of both penance and triumph.

The Cross, therefore, occupies a central place in the liturgical life of the Roman Church. Organically and progressively, it became the focal point of the offering of the Mass. From very early on the eastward direction of the Eucharistic celebration was signified by a Cross, which came to be the sign of the Son of Man, highlighting the eschatological and Trinitarian dimensions of the Mass.[432]

The First Roman Order has a notable instruction related to orientation: for the post-communion prayer the celebrant "rises with the archdeacon and coming to the altar, says the prayer for completion facing east, for in that place, when he has said *Dominus vobiscum*, he does not turn to the people."[433] Stefan Heid has argued that, because *Ordo Primus* deals with the Papal stational liturgy and would therefore have to be applied in churches with a different geographical orientation, the instruction to turn towards the east would indicate turning to the central apse, and not towards the geographical east. The clarification to "not turn to the people" would make no sense in a church oriented to the east, where the position of the Pope would have not been towards the people.[434] If this were true, it would not be difficult to see the constant presence of the Cross in the apses of Roman churches as the focal point of the orientation of the liturgical prayer of the early Christians.

The Cross is at the core of the Eucharist, not only as an image to be seen but, symbolically, as the place into which the celebrant enters. The Mass is the renewal of the sacrifice of Christ; the *locus* where the Cross is still present and bearing fruit for the Church. In this respect, we should note

[432] See Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith," in *Collected Works*, XI:389–390.
[433] *Ordo* I, 123. See also *Ordo* I, 51, 53.
[434] Stefan Heid, *La Preghiera dei Primi Cristiani* (Magnano: Editzioni Qiqajon, 2013), 79–81.

one final instruction in *Ordo* I: at the heart of the celebration of the Mass, as the Eucharistic prayer begins, "the celebrant alone rises during the canon."[435] Andrieu specifies that other manuscripts do not read "*surgit solus in canone,*" but "*intrat in canonem* [enters on the canon]." Atchley's version says: "*surgit pontifex solus et intrat in canonem*" [the pontiff rises alone and enters on the canon]."[436] Certainly, it is not problematic to comprehend the instruction that the Pope, at that point, begins alone the recitation of the Canon. However, if we remember that the quiet recitation of the Canon was becoming common around that time, as the Canon was seen as a holy of holies into which only the celebrant could enter,[437] it might be possible to recognize in the expression *intrat*[438] *in canonem* a symbolic meaning indicating that the priest is, at that point, crossing the threshold of the holy of holies, where the veil of the true temple of Christ's body was torn (cf. Mt 27:51): his side opened on the Cross, from where the Church receives the gift of the sacraments.

[435] *Ordo* I, 88.

[436] *Ordo Romanus primus*, ed. E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley (London: The De la More Press, 1905), 138–139.

[437] See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, II:104–105.

[438] The meanings of *intro* are: 1. To go into, enter (a closed or defined space); 2. To appear in court; to penetrate; 3. To enter upon; to enter into with the mind; 4. To enter upon (a period of time), to begin. See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 954.

III

Contributions to Contemporary Debates

The investigation on the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist in patristic and Roman liturgical sources shows that the Cross had indeed a remarkable place in the liturgical life of the Church during the decisive period of dogmatic and liturgical development from the fourth to the eighth centuries. In the many texts examined, we have found three recurring aspects of our topic: the constant *idea* of the Cross as a fundamental key to understand the mystery of the Eucharist, as seen in many of the themes of the previous chapters (e.g. the Cross as origin of the Eucharist, the continuity from the Cross to the Eucharist, the Wood of Life and the new paradise, the sacrifice, the offering of the Holy Victim, etc.); the ancient and common *gesture* of making the sign of the Cross during the Eucharistic celebration, especially over the bread and wine; and the physical presence of the Cross as an *object* on the Eucharistic altar. The thematic organization of the materials provided a good picture of the presence of the Cross in the Eucharist, allowing us to see the more salient common emphases of the theological understanding and liturgical practice of the Roman Church during this period.

In the Introduction I mentioned that Joseph Ratzinger's diagnosis indicated that the problems of recent liturgical reform in the Catholic Church were centered on the lack of clarity in regard to the relation between the dogmatic and liturgical levels. As a general conclusion and contribution, I will proceed in this final chapter to apply the results of the study of primary sources as seen in the threefold presence of the Cross in the Eucharist (idea, gesture, object) to three related areas of contemporary theological-liturgical debate, briefly mentioned in the Introduction: the unity of the Last Supper and the Cross in the context of the discussion of

the Eucharist as a meal; the sign of the Cross and the problem of the Roman epiclesis; and the question about the pertinence of placing a Cross on the altar.

1 THE UNITY OF THE LAST SUPPER AND THE CROSS AND THE DISCUSSION OF THE EUCHARIST AS MEAL

As we have been able to appreciate, the Cross is a fundamental element in the theological understanding of the different aspects of the Eucharistic mystery. The relevance of the theological presence of the *idea* of the Cross in the comprehension and consequent practice of the Eucharist found in the review of patristic and liturgical texts offers the possibility of bringing those findings to the current debate about the "meal character" of the Mass. Is the Eucharist a meal? If so, in what sense? Can the "meal character" be reconciled with the "sacrificial character"? Do these two aspects have the same level of importance? I propose that the idea of the Cross offers a fundamental key to understanding this problem.

Modern scholarship has shown great interest in the reality of meals as a background against which the Eucharist ought to be understood.[1] In a recent ecumenical volume, the Anglican author Gordon Jeanes writes: "If we are to make sense of what the Eucharist is, we need to start with those meals recounted in the New Testament."[2] He goes on to assert that the daily meals of Jesus with tax collectors and sinners – an image of the kingdom (cf. Mk 2:16; Mt 22:1–14, etc.) – so frequently connected with important words (parables) and deeds (miracles), ought to be seen as the context for the Last Supper, which is the key to understanding the Eucharist. He points out that the presence of the Risen Christ will frequently be perceived in connection with food, and that the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread (cf. Lk 24:13–35; Jn 21:1–14).[3]

[1] See Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2014), 20–33, and *T&T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Soham Al-Suadi and Peter-Ben Smit (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018).

[2] Gordon Jeanes, "Eucharist," in *The Study of Liturgy and Worship: An Alcuin Guide*, eds. Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013), 135.

[3] See Ibid., 135–136.

Philippe Roulliard[4] indicates the importance of the human reality of meals, with its characteristics of hunger, nourishment, life, and order, as a necessary framework for understanding the Eucharist. Human meals, he notes, are not just useful activities, but activities that bring pleasure and are normally taken in common. Furthermore, almost all religions have some kind of sacred meal as part of their rituals. Both the Old and the New Testaments are filled with meal symbolism. Paul Bradshaw[5] will go further and explain the emergence of the Eucharist from the context of the regular meals of Christians, in which they would experience an eschatological anticipation of the Kingdom, recalling the stories of Jesus eating. For those in precarious situations, Jesus would become their spiritual food. Bradshaw constructs this hypothetical narrative assuming that it was probably Paul who associated the sayings of Jesus about being fed by his flesh and blood with the Last Supper, an idea that appeared as a source of comfort for those who were persecuted, particularly in Rome, where the author of the gospel of Mark would have introduced these words in his already existing account of the Supper. The fact that this essential connection with the regular meal has been lost means, for Bradshaw, that the importance of communion and of being fed by the living flesh and blood of Jesus diminished, while the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist grew in prominence.

Undoubtedly, the Eucharist has a meal dimension that forms part of its reality. How are we to understand this in connection with other aspects of the Eucharist, most notably, its sacrificial character? In the context of the twentieth century Liturgical Movement, several authors offered contributions to this problem. Manfred Hauke has provided an excellent overview of the development of the topic, especially in the German theological landscape, from which some highlights will be referenced here.[6] In his paper, Hauke indicates

[4] Philippe Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist," in *Living Bread, Saving Cup: Readings on the Eucharist*, ed. R. Kevin Seasoltz, OSB (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1987), 126–157.

[5] See Paul F. Bradshaw, "Did Jesus Institute the Eucharist at the Last Supper?" in *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010), 17–19. For another reconstruction of the daily meals with sinners that were repeated by Christians for generations before they would become a "religious service," see Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Eucharist as 'The Meal That Should Be,'" *Worship* 80 (2006): 35.

[6] Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration according to Joseph Ratzinger," in *Benedict XVI and the Roman Missal: Proceedings of the Fourth Fota International Liturgical Conference, 2011*, eds. Janet E. Rutherford and James O'Brien (Dublin and New York: Four Court Press and Scepter Publishers, 2013), 70–82.

that the tendency towards a significant growth in the importance of the meal aspect of the Mass begins with the works of Franz Seraph Renz (1884–1916), who said that "Eucharistic worship is essentially a meal with a sacrificial character."[7] The discussion of the topic developed later into the problem of the "basic structure" of the Eucharist. In 1939 Romano Guardini (1885–1968) composed some meditations that proved to be of great influence for the Liturgical Movement and, as will be seen, for some of the consequent reforms advanced in the past century. Guardini said that the basic structure of the Mass is the meal; the "structure [of the Mass] is the meal; behind it – not as structure, but as reality, as fountain, as condition – is the sacrifice."[8] The insistence on rediscovering the meal aspect of the Mass was certainly significant; however, it introduced a theological problem: "the divergence between the content and the form of the Holy Mass, between 'exterior' and 'interior.'"[9] Furthermore, in the words of Ratzinger, "if the structure is not merely a ceremonial form, but at its core is an indispensable manifestation of its essential content, it makes absolutely no sense to separate the one from the other."[10]

This separation, based on the idea of the "basic structure" of the Eucharist, continued in the writings of other influential scholars. Gottlieb Söhngen (1892–1971), following the *théorie du banquet* [banquet theory] of French theologians, justified the explanation of the meal as the form of the Eucharist because a sacramental sacrifice is not a sacrifice in its proper form.[11] Similarly, Michael Schmaus (1897–1993) taught that "meal is the basic form of the eucharistic sacrifice."[12] And Joseph Pascher (1893–1979) also wrote that "the structure of the Holy Mass is that of

[7] Franz Seraph Renz, *Geschichte des Messopferbegriffs* (Freising: Datterer, 1902), 500. Quoted in Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration according to Joseph Ratzinger," 70.

[8] Romano Guardini, *Besinnung vor der feier der Heilegen Messe*, 76. Quoted in Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration," 77.

[9] Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration," 79.

[10] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:301.

[11] See Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration," 80.

[12] Michael Schmaus, *The Eucharist*, trans. Francis Germovnik (Lemont, Ill.: De Andreis Seminary, 1973), 101.

a meal."[13] More recently, the American Jesuit Edward Kilmartin (1923–1994), commenting on the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist said that "the Eucharist renders present the reality of the mystery of the cross in the form of a sacramental memorial meal of the Church . . . the visible sign of the sacrifice is the meal."[14] Kilmartin expounded this idea as he wrote: "the meal character belongs to the shape of the celebration, because the meal has to do with the *modus quo*, not the *id quod* of the celebration."[15]

These examples suffice to show that the separation between the form (meal) and content (sacrifice) of the Eucharist has been a hallmark of the theological-liturgical discussions of the twentieth century: the meal aspect became the main way of thinking about the specific shape of the Eucharistic celebration, assuming that the Lord's command to "Do this" referred to the meal structure of the Last Supper. Furthermore, during the sixties and seventies, "sometimes the sacrificial aspect was put to the side, whereas the 'meal aspect' was set in the forefront."[16] Key to this emphasis was the Liturgical Movement's promotion of the communal elements of the liturgy and also the efforts made in the field of ecumenical dialogue with the Protestant view of the Eucharist as the Lord's Supper.[17]

The increasing emphasis on the meal aspect of the Mass influenced some changes made around the time of the Second Vatican Council. Rouillard wrote in 1987 that "the recent liturgical reform, and the entire theological and spiritual movement which accompanied it, has restored readability and vigor to the symbols which Christ himself took in hand in order to charge them with his life and his salvation."[18] Michael Lang, writing nearly 20 years later, also explains that the "intention to reclaim the perception of the Eucharist as a sacred banquet" motivated some reforms, most notably the promotion of the celebration *versus populum* [towards the people].[19]

[13] Joseph Pascher, *Eucharistia: Gestalt und Vollzug* (Münster and Krailling, 1947), 8. Quoted in Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:300.

[14] Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 199.

[15] Ibid., 340.

[16] Manfred Hauke "What is the Holy Mass? The Systematic Discussion on the 'essence' of Eucharistic Sacrifice," in *Celebrating the Eucharist: Sacrifice and Communion*, Proceedings of the Fifth Fota International Liturgical Conference, 2012, ed. Gerard Deighan, Fota Liturgy Series, 5 (Wells, England: Smenos Publications, 2014), 113.

[17] Ibid. [18] Philippe Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist," 154–155.

[19] Uwe Michael Lang, *Turning towards the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 120–121.

It was in a discussion on the consequences of this particular reform that Ratzinger delivered his critique of a new vision of the liturgy. He argued that the celebration *versus populum* was not just an external rearrangement, but one that has led to a new understanding of the Mass: "In fact it is the most conspicuous consequence of a reordering that not only signifies a new external arrangement of the places dedicated to the liturgy, but also brings with it a new idea of the essence of the liturgy – the liturgy as a communal meal."[20] Criticizing Ratzinger's view, John Baldovin wrote in 2010: "I would suggest that it is *precisely* as shared meal that we encounter the deepest meaning of Jesus' self-gift to the Father."[21] The issue is complex and the controversy is very much alive.

From a *historical* viewpoint, after years of debate, today it is possible to recognize, with Baldovin, "that historical honesty requires us to admit that the idea that the early liturgy was habitually celebrated *versus populum* was mistaken."[22] Michael Lang[23] and Stefan Heid[24] have made significant contributions along this line.[25] From a *theological* perspective the problem seems ultimately to lie in the right relation between the meal and sacrifice aspects of the Mass. The view of the structure of the Eucharistic celebration as a meal in some way left aside the dogmatic foundation of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. In order to bring together both elements, Pascher read a sacrificial symbolism into the meal structure.[26]

[20] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Spirit of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:47. About the idea of the Protestant influence in some of the post-conciliar reforms in the Catholic Church see, Bernard Reymond, "Du Sacrifice de la Messe à la Convivialité de la Cène, ou la Réforme Vue Sous L'Angle des Rituels," *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 76 (2001/3): 357–370.

[21] John F. Baldovin, SJ, "Idols and Icons: Reflections on the Current State of Liturgical Reform," *Worship* 84 (2010): 396.

[22] John F. Baldovin, SJ, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2008), 112.

[23] See Uwe Michael Lang, *Turning towards the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer*, especially 21–33, 120–121.

[24] Stefan Heid, "Gebetshaltung und Ostung in frühchristlicher Zeit," in *Revista di Archeologia Cristiana* 82 (2006). Italian version: *La Preghiera dei Primi Cristiani* (Magnano: Editzioni Qiqajon, 2013). For a critique of the thesis of the Eucharistic altar as a meal table see Stefan Heid, "The Early Christian Altar – Lessons for Today," in *Sacred Liturgy: The Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*, ed. Alcuin Reid (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 91–94.

[25] See also Jaime Lara, "*Versus Populum* Revisited," *Worship* 68 (1994): 210–221, and a recent article offering conclusions contrary to those of Lang and Heid: Robin M. Jensen, "Recovering Ancient Ecclesiology: The Place of the Altar and the Orientation of Prayer in the Early Latin Church," *Worship* 89 (2015): 99–124.

[26] See Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith," in *Collected Works*, XI:301. For other recent attempts at explaining the Supper as a surrogate of sacrifice or as a new cultic sacrifice,

It is, indeed, clear – as Paul Bradshaw indicated – that the Last Supper contains some sacrificial elements and that the New Testament presents the Last Supper as a Passover meal with sacrificial overtones.[27] However, finding sacrificial features in the meal does not appear to bring sufficient unity to these aspects. Can the form (meal) and the content (sacrifice) of the Eucharist truly be such different realities?

I maintain that the key for a balanced understanding of the different elements of the Eucharist is found – as the review of textual tradition shows – in seeing the institution of the Eucharist united to the sacrifice of the Cross. Because the reconstruction of a Last Supper without an institution of the Eucharist can only be a hypothesis, it is prudent to assume a canonical reading of the tradition received and kept, in which the Last Supper is the opening act of the Passion, culminating on the Cross and fulfilled in the Resurrection.[28] Many patristic texts in this survey have shown this early and solid vision of unity and continuity: the Eucharist is the sacrament of the flesh that was crucified (Ambrose) and its celebration is the proclamation of the death of Christ, whose blood is shed each time that it is poured at the celebration of the Mass (Ambrose). The Eucharist, the morning oblation that makes fruitful for us today Jesus' evening sacrifice (Augustine), was given to us on the night in which he was delivered up to be crucified (Gaudentius). During the Supper Jesus gave his disciples his Eucharistic body, the very body that the sun saw crucified (Chrysostom). The Cross is the origin of the Eucharist, instituted during the Supper as the Passion began, fulfilled on the Cross from where the open side of the Redeemer gave us the sacraments of the Church (Ambrose, Augustine, Quodvultdeus, Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrus). The Cross, from which we are fed (Paulinus), is the new tree of life (Caesarius) from which we receive the new fruit that leads to the new paradise, as found in various euchological texts of the sacramentaries.

The continuity goes from the Last Supper to the Cross and Resurrection, but it also comes from the Cross to the offering of the Eucharist: "That which he suffered not on the Cross, this he suffers in the oblation" (Chrysostom). It is in the Eucharist that the mysteries of

see, for example, Bruce Chilton's and Bernhard Lang's contributions to *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[27] See Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010), 65.

[28] See Salvatore Marsili, "La 'Cena del Signore' è una Eucaristia," in *Eucaristia: Teologia e Storia della Celebrazione*, eds. S. Marsili et al. (Genova: Casa Editrice Marietti, 1983), 11–18.

faith are brought together, as frequently expressed in the prayers of the sacramentaries, where Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, and Resurrection appear together in prayers for various celebrations. This unity comes from the sacrifice of the Cross that is renewed in the Eucharist, called simply by the Fathers, sacramentaries, and *Ordines*, "the sacrifice."

In the review of the Roman Canon we noticed another significant suggestion about the unity of supper and Cross: the sacred moment of the Institution Narrative opens with the words "on the day before he was to suffer" and not, as is the case for the Eastern anaphoras, with the phrase "in the night in which he was betrayed." In this way, the Roman liturgy connects the Eucharist not only with the Last Supper as a self-standing event, but with the Passion as a whole. The Eucharist, therefore, cannot be justly understood if its structure is to be sought in the meal, but only if it comes from the redemptive act of Christ, expressed in the institution of the sacrament at the Last Supper, and culminating in the Cross and Resurrection. The Eucharist comes from the Cross; the Cross offers the hermeneutical key for a harmonious comprehension of the different elements that inform the theological understanding of the Eucharist, because ultimately, the Cross and the Eucharist contain the same act of sacrificial offering. This connection between Cross and Eucharist, Institution and Passion, was so natural for the early Church that the second Mass offered in Jerusalem on Holy Thursday, which commemorated the institution of the Eucharist, was not celebrated in the Cenacle but *Post Crucem* [behind the Cross], in a small chapel behind the place of crucifixion, where the relics of the Cross would be venerated on the following day.[29]

Here it is appropriate to clarify a possible misunderstanding. In his study on the Eucharist from the Council of Trent to our modern times, Edward Kilmartin talks about the confusion "caused by Trent's use of *offerre* [to offer] when referring both to the historical sacrifice of the cross and to the liturgical-ritual sacrificial act of the eucharistic celebration."[30] For Kilmartin this created a "terminological problem," as the Council mixed up the historical sacrifice of Christ and its liturgical expression by using *offerre* for both. I posit that it is precisely the unity of the same sacrificial offering that makes the Eucharist not just a formal ritual but

[29] See *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage*, trans. George E. Gingras (New York: Newman Press, 1970), 108 and footnote 368.

[30] Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, 198.

a true commemoration that makes present the same sacrifice.[31] This same sacrifice of Jesus, offered historically on the Cross and liturgically in the Eucharist, is an essential element of an integral understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Rather than being a confusion introduced by Trent, we have seen an abundance of texts in which *offerre* was used both for the historical Cross and the liturgical Mass. Authors such as Ambrose, Eusebius of Cesarea, Jerome, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and Leo the Great, as well as numerous prayers from the Roman sacramentaries, including the Roman Canon, testify to this. Certainly, it was not a modern distinction of concepts that shaped the theological understanding of the Eucharist, but the living conviction that the Cross and the Eucharist are intimately united by the same sacrifice.

This further reinforces the certainty that the offering made at the Last Supper cannot be rightly understood if not in connection with the paschal mystery: the offering of the Cross and the Resurrection. In a text quoted in the first chapter, John Chrysostom clearly sees the meal as the context for the sacrifice: "by the mysteries [he] again reminds the disciples of His being slain, and in the midst of the meal His discourse is of the Cross" (*Homily* 82,1). What Jesus did was to institute his Eucharistic sacrifice in the context of a sacrificial meal.[32] But, as Ratzinger rightly explains, following the exegetical contributions of Heinz Schürmann, "it is clear that Jesus' command to repeat the action does not refer to the Last Supper as a whole, but the specifically Eucharistic action. Thus the Last Supper was not repeated, and this in itself caused a change in the overall structure and gave birth to a specifically Christian form."[33] In this new Christian form, the Eucharistic actions, framed by the prayer of thanksgiving, take place after the ordinary meal: "And He gives thanks, to teach us how we ought to celebrate this sacrament . . . He [did not] appoint the sacrament before this, but when henceforth the rites of the law were to cease."[34] Thus, the Mass cannot be fundamentally understood only from the Last Supper, nor its form found only in the meal. "The Last Supper looks to the Cross, where Jesus' word of self-offering will be fulfilled, and to the hope

[31] See Kilmartin's own reflection on the importance of the Greek notion of commemorative actual presence. *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, 173.

[32] On the new aspects introduced by Jesus in the Supper, see Ángel García Ibáñez, *La Eucaristía, don y misterio: Tratado histórico-teológico sobre el misterio eucarístico* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2009), 61–83.

[33] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith," in *Collected Works*, XI:306.

[34] John Chrysostom, "Homily 82," *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., X:491.

of Resurrection. Apart from them it would be incomplete and, indeed, unreal. Again, this means that the form of the Last Supper is not complete in itself."[35] The Cross appears as a necessary theological key for an integral understanding of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Cross that, celebrated liturgically, makes present the same offering. There is, obviously, an important "meal character" present in the Eucharist, in the sense of nourishment from the sacrifice. However, it does not seem that meal and sacrifice are categories at the same level.[36] We are fed from the sacrifice of the Cross, new tree of life from where we receive the new food of paradise. It is significant that, whereas not one text of the broad sample studied in the previous chapters calls the Eucharist simply a "meal," or a "banquet," many indicate that the Eucharist is food to be eaten and drunk, always qualifying this reality by adding adjectives such as "spiritual," "vital," or "mystical" to the Latin words *cibus* [food], *alimentum* [nourishment], *caena* [supper], *convivium* [banquet], or the Greek terms *trapezes* [table], *depinon* [supper], *trophé* [food]. This suggests that an integral understanding of the "meal character" of the Eucharist would refer to the way of partaking in the sacrifice, being thus nourished by the food and drink that come from it.

2 THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE ROMAN EPICLESIS

From the theological consideration of the Cross as the fundamental key for a balanced and integral understanding of the different aspects of the Eucharist, we proceed to consider an application of liturgical form and practice: the gesture of signing with the Cross. The spirituality of the Cross, evident in the literature of the cult of the martyrs, became a visible symbol, "first of all not in the form of an image, but as

[35] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith," in *Collected Works*, XI:318, footnote 23. See also, Basil Meeking, "Celebrating the Liturgy with Pope Benedict XVI," *Logos* 11:1 (2008): 142.

[36] See Manfred Hauke, "The 'basic structure' (Grundgestalt) of the Eucharistic celebration according to Joseph Ratzinger," 104–105. Andrew McGowan warns against the risk of interpreting the Eucharist using only one idea, particularly, in his view, the emphasis on the remembrance of the death of Christ. See *Ancient Christian Worship*, 62–63. Meal and sacrifice have important but not necessarily equivalent places in the understanding of the Eucharist. On the primacy of the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist over other aspects, such as real presence, communion, and unity, see Aidan Nichols, OP, "The Holy Oblation: On the Primacy of Eucharistic Sacrifice," *Downside Review* 122 (2004): 259–272.

a gesture."[37] In a great number of texts we have seen that, very early, sealing with the Cross became an action frequently performed in liturgical rites. An understanding of the roots and original meaning of this gesture can shed light upon the recent debate about the place of this sign and of the epiclesis in the Roman rite by demonstrating that this gesture has a necessary sanctifying effect parallel to the epicletic invocation within the celebration of the Eucharist.

First, let us briefly review some of the findings of our investigation. The sign of the Cross made over objects and people effectively separates them for sacred uses, invoking God's blessing and sanctification over them. For example, as seen in patristic literature, water, necessary for Baptism and the Eucharist, is consecrated by the mystery of the Cross and by its proclamation (Ambrose); the Cross is the sign of Christ, the proper rite that is applied to the water, to oil or to "the sacrifice" (Augustine).[38] Before the offering is sanctified through the sign of the Cross, it is just plain bread (Ephrem); after the Eucharistic prayer, the priest brings together the consecrated species making the sign of the Cross (Theodore of Mopsuestia).

The Roman sacramentaries also mention frequently the gesture of sealing with the Cross. The Cross is made over the water used for Baptism, recalling the source of Baptism in the water that flowed from the side of the crucified Christ. A Cross is made with oil on the paten that will be blessed to hold the body of the Lord. Five crosses are made upon the offerings during the *Te igitur*, at the beginning of the Roman Canon, as a sign of blessing over the elements that will be consecrated during the Eucharistic prayer, just as a Cross is sealed upon the catechumens who will be later baptized with water.

Finally, the *Ordines Romani* contain as well various instructions concerning the gesture of signing with the Cross. The Cross is sealed upon the foreheads of those who are going to receive Baptism, and the holy chrism is applied on the heads in the form of a Cross. The Cross is made also upon

[37] Richard Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 41.

[38] Robin Jensen writes that Augustine's statement is "a rare, early reference to this sign made during the eucharistic liturgy." See Robin M. Jensen, *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2017), 37. As we have seen, Augustine is hardly the only early witness of this practice. Ambrose, Ephrem, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Cyril of Jerusalem also write about this sign made during the Eucharistic liturgy.

the altar during its consecration, a ritual that parallels the rites of initiation: the Cross is made with water as in Baptism, with oil as in Confirmation, and over the offerings during the Eucharist. In all different kinds of sources (patristic, liturgical, and ritual) we find that the gesture of making the sign of the Cross is more than a symbolic remembrance, but rather an effective liturgical practice.

Our study also brought forward the rich idea of the *sphragis* [seal]. *Sphragis* is the sign of possession and protection, the eschatological sign of the Son of Man sealed on the foreheads of those who will be saved, as foreseen in Ezekiel 9:4 and Revelation 7:2. The *sphragis* finds its vital context in the liturgy. Recent scholarship has rightly highlighted the connection of Baptism and *sphragis*, and therefore, of Baptism and the Cross. I believe it is pertinent now to reclaim the connection of Eucharist and *sphragis*. There are several texts that use *sphragis* as a reference to the Eucharistic Body of Christ, and in a remarkable number of testimonies from the earliest liturgies we saw that the Cross was sealed several times and in different ways during the celebration of the Eucharist. The Cross as *sphragis* is the gesture that seals and provides sanctification for the celebration of the Eucharist.

In the previous section we saw how the theological understanding of the Mass as a meal led to certain liturgical reforms. Similarly, the lack of clarity concerning the original meaning of the gesture of the sign of the Cross during the Eucharistic celebration has led to liturgical changes throughout history. For example, in the Roman rite, towards the end of the patristic era and the beginning of the Middle Ages, we find a multiplication of signs of the Cross during the celebration of the Mass. In the Roman Canon, from the time of the earliest evidence available, the Cross was sealed several times over the bread and wine. According to the Gelasian sacramentary, the sign of the Cross was made five times at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer; later, *Ordo* VII indicates that the same gesture was made 25 times during the Canon, including several crosses made after the Institution Narrative. While this multiplication of the signs of the Cross indicates an increase in the awareness of the presence of the Cross during the Mass, it also seems to signal a growing loss of its original benedictory meaning. Because the theological understanding of the gesture of signing with the Cross determines its practice, when its original significance – as an effective blessing – lost prominence, other meanings – such as a devout remembrance of the Passion – caused its multiplication.

Moving on to a recent debate, in the reforms following the Second Vatican Council we note that the number of signs of the Cross during the recitation of the Canon in the ordinary form of the Roman rite was reduced to one, made at the beginning during the *Te igitur*, when the celebrant priest asks God to bless the offerings. As such, the Cross still appears as a central and necessary gesture that blesses the elements that will be consecrated during the recitation of the anaphora. This change is connected with another one that leads us more fully into my main point and suggestion – the sign of the Cross and the epiclesis: the imposition of hands over the offerings was transferred from the *Hanc igitur* to the *Quam oblationem*, in an effort to emphasize an epicletic meaning to the gesture. Although it became common to read "a kind of consecratory epiclesis" in this prayer without its being a proper epiclesis,[39] it appears more accurate to say, as Aidan Kavanagh emphatically stated, that this prayer "is neither pneumatic nor unambiguously 'consecratory.'"[40] Moreover, historically, the imposition of hands did not enter into the Canon until approximately the fourteenth century. This gesture, while certainly important, was not present in the celebration of the Roman Mass for many centuries; but even more noteworthy, there are no indications that it was ever considered an epiclesis. Rather, it was a way of calling attention (pointing – *hanc*) to the oblation being offered at that moment.[41]

The reason for introducing an epicletic meaning to the imposition of hands now found at the *Quam oblationem* is related to one of the most critical topics of debate of the post-conciliar reform: the Eucharistic prayer. The Roman Canon was frequently discussed in the years before and after the Second Vatican Council. Some, notably Cipriano Vagaggini, of great influence in the composition of the new prayers by the *Consilium* in charge of executing the liturgical reform,[42] expressed concern for

[39] See, for example, A. Nocent, "Storia della Celebrazione dell' Eucaristia," in *Eucaristia: Teologia e Storia della Celebrazione*, eds. S. Marsili et al. (Casa Editrice Marietti: Genova, 1983), 240.

[40] Aidan Kavanagh, "Thoughts on the New Eucharistic Prayers," in *Living Bread, Saving Cup: Readings on the Eucharist*, ed. R. Kevin Seasoltz, OSB (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1987), 106. On the arguments in favor and (mostly) against an epicletic meaning of the *Quam oblationem*, see William J. Lallou, *The "Quam Oblationem" of the Roman Canon: A Study of a Significant Prayer of the Mass* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1943), 39–47.

[41] See Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 2012), II:186.

[42] See Kavanagh, "Thoughts on the New Eucharistic Prayers," 109.

certain serious defects in the Canon.[43] One of these purported defects was, precisely, the lack of an explicit pneumatological epiclesis,[44] a topic about which much has been written in the past century.[45]

It is worth mentioning that Vagaggini's assessment comes from a modern method: that of comparative liturgy.[46] Based on this approach, the Eastern anaphoras – as evidenced in the correspondence and reports of the works of the *Consilium*[47] – were seen as paradigms for evaluating the Roman anaphora. Particularly, the so-called Apostolic Tradition became the model for studying the reform of the Canon.

Behind this decision we can find the influential work of Dom Bernard Botte, who insisted on the importance of the anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition because of its supposed *Romanitas* and antiquity, and who consequently, based on its text, promoted the creation of Eucharistic Prayer II for the new Roman missal,[48] although not without significant modifications that were an attempt to adapt to contemporary mentality.[49] The historic foundations defended by Dom Botte for this text are now seriously challenged,[50] as Matthieu Smyth said: "What a paradox for

[43] See Cipriano Vagaggini, *The Canon of the Roman Mass and Liturgical Reform Mass and Liturgical Reform* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), 90–107.

[44] See Matthew S. Ernest, "The Postconciliar Reform of the Sign of the Cross and the Imposition of Hands over the Gifts in the Roman Canon," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 127 (2013): 299.

[45] A good summary of this problem can be found in John H. McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, Mundelein, Ill.: Hillebrand Books, 2009). For a historical presentation of testimonies on the epiclesis, see E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *On the Epiclesis of the Eucharistic Liturgy and in the Consecration of the Font* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935). For a recent and comprehensive study of the epiclesis, including contemporary works, see Anne McGowan, *Eucharistic Epicleses, Ancient and Modern: Speaking of the Spirit in Eucharistic Prayer* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2014).

[46] On Baumstark's comparative liturgy method and the influence of biology and comparative anatomy, which regards liturgical evolution as moving from simplicity and brevity to richness and prolixity, see Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of Its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 59–60.

[47] See Ernest, "The Postconciliar Reform of the Sign of the Cross," 294–295.

[48] See Matthieu Smyth, "The Anaphora of the So-Called 'Apostolic Tradition' and the Roman Eucharistic Prayer," in *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010), 95. For a brief account of the hasty process of creation of this anaphora see Louis Bouyer, *The Memoirs of Louis Bouyer: From Youth and Conversion to Vatican II, the Liturgical Reform, and After* (Kettering, Oh: Angelico Press, 2015), 221–222.

[49] See Smyth, "The Anaphora of the So-Called 'Apostolic Tradition,'" 96.

[50] See Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 80–83;

a document that in reality never had a relationship with the city and that in many respects was less ancient than the Roman Canon, the authentic Eucharistic prayer proper to the Church of Rome!"[51]

The influence of the importance given to the so-called Apostolic Tradition did not end in the creation of a new anaphora, but in the fact that, as was mentioned earlier, this text became a paradigm for the reform of the Roman Canon. That a text that presents so numerous unanswered questions about its very value, genre, geographical origin, and authorship was the model for the reform of the Canon is in itself a source of further questions, but the main point for our topic is this: why were the analysis, critique and reform of the Roman Canon based on Eastern texts? Furthermore, should the absence of an explicit epiclesis be considered a deficiency? The textual evidence clearly shows that that kind of prayer was never present in the text of the Canon; its reconstruction cannot be more than speculation.[52] As Willis states, "the epiclesis did not find a place in it [the Roman rite], and is indeed foreign to its structure and to its theory of consecration."[53] Any *a priori* assumption – such as Vagaggini's[54] – of the existence and later disappearance of the epiclesis

Manlio Simonetti, "Hippolytus," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, eds. Angelo Di Berardino et al. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2014), II:246.

[51] Smyth, "The Anaphora of the So-Called 'Apostolic Tradition,'" 95. Ultimately, "*Prex Eucharistica II* is in reality an original composition, painted in bright colors, the creative fruit of experts of the *Consilium* who took the anaphora of the *Diatexis* as their point of departure . . . Its features faithfully reflect the concerns of a small group of liturgists in the middle of the twentieth century." Ibid., 97.

[52] See, for example, Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2012), 405–406. Fortescue also recalls Battifol's denial that the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit was universal or primitive and that it ever had a place in the Roman prayer. Fortescue, 147–148. Edmund Bishop signals the *Quam oblationem* as a sort of Roman epiclesis. 136–137. See Edmund Bishop, "Observations on the Liturgy of Narsai," appendix to *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, trans. Dom R. H. Connolly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 137–138. In any case, it appears that some of these hypotheses can be considered only if we "take the word epiclesis in its broad sense." Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 145. There is no evidence of an ancient epiclesis in the Roman Canon. The only reference worthy of notice is from Pope Gelasius, who reigned from 492 to 496, and who in a letter wrote "How will the heavenly Spirit when invoked come for the consecration of the divine mystery . . . ?" See Atchley, *On the Epiclesis of the Eucharistic Liturgy*, 177. This text, certainly important, cannot be conclusive about the existence of an epiclesis in the Canon. Based on the evidence of the sources and not on pre-formulated ideas, a canonical reading to the Roman Eucharistic prayer appears as the best approach.

[53] G. G. Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy to the Death of Pope Gregory the Great* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1994), 52.

[54] See Kavanagh, "Thoughts on the New Eucharistic Prayers," 110.

in the Roman Canon will always remain in the realm of hypothetical speculation.

Additionally, it is not so certain – as it was thought – that every Eastern Eucharistic prayer does contain an explicit pneumatological and consecratory epiclesis. Michael Zheltov, recognizing the constant Byzantine concern about the Eucharistic epiclesis, challenges the importance ascribed to it by late and post-Byzantine theology.[55] The anaphora of Addai and Mari does not have a consecratory epiclesis but only an epiclesis as a prayer for the fruits of communion,[56] and even of the Eucharistic Prayer of the so-called Apostolic Tradition it can be said that it "gives no epiclesis that is consecratory without ambiguity, and none at all except that in the anamnesis."[57]

Based on the actual textual evidence, it is necessary to challenge the idea of the absence of an explicit epiclesis in the Roman Canon as a defect. This assumption appears as an example of the imposition of a modern idea and method onto an ancient text, a venerable prayer that developed in the context of "a splendid euchological isolation,"[58] representing unequivocally the Roman liturgical tradition. And, as Robert Taft said in regards to the hypothetical missing Institution Narrative in the anaphora of Addai and Mari, "scholarly opinion tends to respect a text as it is, and presumes that to be its pristine form until the contrary is proven."[59]

Therefore, accepting the Canon found in the Gelasian sacramentary as its pristine form, and returning to the beginning of this section, we can draw two conclusions: first, there is no pneumatological epiclesis; second, the signs of the Cross are made only at the beginning of the prayer. Being aware that "'Western' prayers have the words of institution preceded by a petition for consecration,"[60] I posit that, if we read the Roman Canon without the requirement of an explicit consecratory epiclesis, and understand the importance of a prayer that calls upon the name of God invoking

[55] Michael Zheltov, "The Moment of Eucharist Consecration in Byzantine Thought," in *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010), 263.

[56] See Peter G. Cobb, "The Anaphora of Addai and Mari," in *The Study of the Liturgy*, eds. Cheslyn Jones et al. (London and New York: SPCK and Oxford University Press, 1992), 219.

[57] Kavanagh, "Thoughts on the New Eucharistic Prayers," 110.

[58] Smyth, "The Anaphora of the So-Called 'Apostolic Tradition,'" 76.

[59] Robert F. Taft, "Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," *Worship* 77 (2003): 489.

[60] Jeanes, "Eucharist," 144.

his blessing over the offerings, then the ancient gesture of signing with the Cross confers this benedictory sanctification, fulfilled through the recitation of the Institution Narrative and the whole anaphora. Originally, thus, sealing with the Cross was not just a symbolic gesture, but a necessary and effective liturgical action. Consequently, the sign of the Cross of Christ, which is a Trinitarian confession, blesses the offerings through the power of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps here we can find a beautiful fruit of the new Eucharistic Prayers, in which the sign of the Cross over the offerings is always the conclusion of the epiclesis, forming, therefore, one act of blessing, in which the Holy Trinity seals the bread and wine that will become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

3 THE HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ALTAR CROSS

I mentioned in the Introduction that the question that originally motivated this study concerned the appropriateness of placing a Cross on the Eucharistic altar. From there I saw that it was necessary to embark on a broader investigation that would go to the sacramental theology underpinning that practice by reviewing the evidence of patristic and liturgical texts. The sources have offered solid foundations for appreciating the centrality of the Cross in the understanding and practice of the Eucharist during the fourth to the eighth centuries. The results of the study are also relevant for shedding light on some contemporary debates, as we have done in the previous two sections of this chapter. Now we can go back to our original question and ask, after having reviewed the sources, whether it is appropriate to use the altar Cross.

As was noted in the Introduction, the immediate context of the question is the practice of Pope Benedict XVI, continued by his successor Pope Francis, of placing a crucifix on the altar whenever he celebrated the Mass. I argue that, although there are arguments in favor and against this custom, the use of the Cross on the Eucharistic altar is a recommended practice that brings together the different aspects of the Eucharist and expresses the emphases shown in our study of the textual tradition.

The objections to this practice come from two areas: history and, more important, sacramental theology. Before reviewing the historical objections to the altar Cross and some relevant data from our research, let us survey briefly the state of the scholarship about the Cross and crucifixion.[61] It has been a well-established belief among scholars that

[61] Important material is found in Stefan Heid, "Kreuz" in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2006), vol. 21, 1099–1148; Jensen,

devotion to the Cross and particularly its depiction were basically non-existent prior to the fourth century.[62] There is, however, noteworthy evidence that invites us to re-think certain assumptions. Several ancient writers attest to the importance of the Cross from well before Helena and Constantine.[63] Its early depiction in manuscripts is noteworthy,[64] as are some archaeological findings,[65] such as epigraphical occurrences of the Cross,[66] and even more – as Felicity Harley-McGowan has shown –

The Cross, and John Granger Cook, *Crucifixion in the Mediterranean World*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 327 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). See also Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Cross before Constantine: The Early Life of a Christian Symbol* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015); Felicity Harley-McGowan, *Picturing the Passion*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Art*, eds. Robin M. Jensen and Mark D. Ellison (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 290–307; Robin M. Jensen, "The Passion in Early Christian Art," in *Perspectives on the Passion: Encountering the Bible through the Arts*, ed. Christine Joynes (London: T & T Clark International, 2007), 53–84; "The Suffering and Dead Christ in Early Christian Art," *The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies* 8 (1995): 22–28; Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross*, 19–55. For a study on the Cross during the centuries that follow the period of our research, see Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Caroligian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a recent theological contribution on the Cross see Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015).

[62] Pocknee writes of "the complete absence" of any depiction of the Passion or the Crucifixion before the fourth century. See Cyril E. Pocknee, *Cross and Crucifix: In Christian Worship and Devotion* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1962), esp. 38. See also F. van der Meer, *Early Christian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 120–122; and Carsten Pieter Thiede and Matthew d'Ancona, *The Quest for the True Cross* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15–17, 123–148. A good synthesis of these positions is found in Longenecker, *The Cross before Constantine*, 7–8.

[63] See Longenecker, *The Cross before Constantine*, 149–161; G. Q. Reijners, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature: As Based upon Old Testament Typology* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt N.V., 1965).

[64] See relevant evidence of the presence of the *staurogram* in New Testament manuscripts in Larry W. Hurtado, "The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts: The Earliest Visual Reference to the Crucified Jesus?" in *New Testament Manuscripts*, eds. T. J. Kraus and T. Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 207–226. Also, for a study of the letter *tau* as the Cross, particularly in Hebrews 2:14, see Thomas E. Schmidt, "The Letter Tau as the Cross: Ornament and Content in Hebrews 2,14," *Biblica* 76,1 (1997): 75–84.

[65] For an impressive collection of material testimonies of the Cross prior to Constantine see Longenecker, *The Cross before Constantine*, 73–148.

[66] For several epigraphical examples see Antonio Enrico Felle, "Croce (crocifissione)," in *Temi di Iconografia Paleocristiana*, ed. Fabrizio Bisconti (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archaeologia Cristiana, 2000), 158–159. On early Roman archaeological findings in Britain related to the Cross: Timothy W. Potter and Catherine Jones, *Roman Britain* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 207; Dorothy Watts, *Christians and Pagans in Roman Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 123.

depictions of the crucifixion, normally thought to exist only from the fifth century onwards.[67] Her studies of some early Christian gems that contain depictions of the crucifixion are particularly relevant to our topic.[68] Two of the gems – the Constanza and Nott carnelians – are probably from the early or mid-fourth century, but one – a large bloodstone intaglio which appears to be an amulet – comes from the late second or early third century.[69] Harley notes its striking similarity with the famous "Alexamenos" graffito found in the Palatine in Rome. This graffito, showing an image which appears to mock devotion to the crucified Jesus, shares some visual elements with the bloodstone intaglio. These two archeological artifacts from the second or third century suggest – in Harley's view – the following conclusions: first, that representation of a crucified Jesus existed in both the Eastern and Western Roman empire by the third century; that designs of the crucifixion were popular enough to circulate among makers and customers of gems; and that both pagans and Christians used depictions of the crucifixion – although for different motives – as a powerful symbol, before the Constantinian Church.[70]

The documented instances of depictions of the Cross and crucifixion prior to the fourth century indicate that it is reasonable to think of the history of those representations in terms of *development*. The fourth century was, indeed, a period of great flourishing and expansion for devotion to and depiction of the Cross, a time described by Robin Jensen as a "gradual shift,"[71] but such piety and practices were not born

[67] See Felicity Harley-McGowan, "The Constanza Carnelian and the Development of Crucifixion Iconography in Late Antiquity," in *Gems of Heaven: Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity*, eds. Chris Entwhistle and Noël Adams (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 218.

[68] See Harley-McGowan, "The Constanza Carnelian and the Development of Crucifixion Iconography in Late Antiquity," 218–219.

[69] Leclerq dates all the gems before the fourth century. See H. Leclerq, "Croix et Crucifix," in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, eds. F. Cabrol and H. Leclerq (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), 3050.

[70] See also from Felicity Harley-McGowan, "The Maskell Passion Ivories and Greco-Roman Art: Notes on the Iconography of Crucifixion," in *Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West*, eds. Juliet Mullins, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, and Richard Hawtree (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 13–33; "Death Is Swallowed Up in Victory," *Cultural Studies Review* 17 (2011), 101–124; "The Crucifixion," in *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, ed. Jeffrey Spier (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 2007), 227–232.

[71] Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 130.

ex nihilo [out of nothing] after its re-discovery (ca. 325/328 AD). Rather, they underwent a progressive and organic growth.

Similarly, it has also been a well-established belief among scholars that convincing evidence of the existence of the altar Cross[72] cannot be found prior to the Middle Ages. While Joseph Braun in his monumental work on the altar and its artifacts affirms, "we cannot say with certainty when the custom to place a Cross upon, beside or behind the altar began in early Christianity or the Middle Ages,"[73] he also thinks that there were no altar crosses before the eleventh century.[74] Cyril Pocknee signals the twelfth century as the time when we have evidence about altar crosses,[75] and Pedro Farnés will say that its use originated in the twelfth century with the growth of private Masses, concluding also from the fact that the Congregation of Rites issued decrees about the necessity of placing a Cross on the altar in the seventeenth century that the custom had unequivocally not been solidly established.[76] This last point is easily proven as inconclusive: the fact, for example, that in 2004 the Congregation for Divine Worship indicated that the matter of the Eucharist is unleavened bread made of pure wheat and natural wine made of grape does not mean that this was not an established practice in the twenty-first century, but that there were some abuses to a universal custom that needed clarification.[77]

Braun posits that it was only with the Missal of Pius V that "the Cross has received a special liturgical significance that it never had had before."[78] Although the learned Jesuit goes on to provide several proofs of the existence of altar crosses from the eleventh century onwards, a careful reading of the patristic texts surveyed in this study, both Western and Eastern from well before the eleventh century, suggests that there are significant references to altar crosses from earlier times than what has been commonly believed, signaling a definite liturgical significance given to the Cross. Particularly notable support for this

[72] Normally an altar Cross is a representation of the crucified Christ.

[73] Joseph Braun, SJ, *Das Christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein und in seiner Entwicklung* (München: Max Hueber, 1932), 468.

[74] Ibid., 467.

[75] See Pocknee, *Cross and Crucifix in Christian Worship and Devotion*, 75.

[76] See Pedro Farnés, "Una obra importante sobre liturgia que debe leerse en su verdadero contexto," *Phase* XLII, 247 (2002): 73.

[77] See Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum: On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist*, 48–50.

[78] See Braun, SJ, *Das Christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein und in seiner Entwicklung*, 472.

conclusion is the text by John Chrysostom in which he describes a Cross shining on the sacred table along with the body of Christ. The analysis of this brief text – which has received very little attention – suggests that, at least in certain instances, as early as the last part of the fourth century, we can find references to the existence of the altar Cross. This fact, which challenges an established academic tradition, is furthermore reinforced as we move from the fourth to the fifth century, when Narsai provides another solid testimony of the adorable wood next to the Gospel of life upon the altar. Ecclesiastical historians such as Sozomen (fifth century) and Evagrius Scholasticus (sixth century) wrote about crosses lying on or affixed to altars; in a similar way, the Synod of Tours (sixth century) instructed that the Eucharist was to be placed under the figure of the Cross that is upon the altar. There are individual cases of Crosses on altars in the sixth century, as reported by Stefan Heid,[79] and in the eighth century, the Venerable Bede describes a great golden Cross consecrated to the service of the altar.

Certainly, the placement of the Cross on the altar was a common practice in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as can be seen, for example, in pictures of Gothic altars,[80] but the fact that the use of the altar Cross became mandated by universal law only centuries later does not necessarily mean that it was a novelty of the Missal of Pius V, but can indicate a progressive development with ancient roots that was later universally mandated by the Church's authority. While it is indeed impossible to determine exactly when the custom of placing a Cross on the Eucharistic altar began, it is surely possible to affirm that there is significant evidence that this tradition was put into practice in some places at least from as early as the fourth century, and eventually became a central symbol of the meaning of the rituals performed in the Eucharistic sacrifice. At any rate, from a historical perspective, this opens the possibility of further study on this topic.

When we move on to the theological aspect of the debate, we find that the question about the altar Cross in the celebration of the Mass, far from being a merely practical problem, leads to a critical discussion about the sacramental theology underpinning the rites of the Mass. In Ratzinger's recommendation, following some insights of Erik Peterson,[81] a Cross

[79] See Heid, "The Early Christian Altar – Lessons for Today," 109.

[80] See Percy Dearmer, *Fifty Pictures of Gothic Altars* (London: Mowbray & Co., 1922), especially: 15, 17, 23, 27, 31, 35, 47, 75, 79, 91, 95, 99, 111, 115, 119, 163, 175, 187, 199, 207.

[81] See Erik Peterson, "La Croce e la Preghiera verso Oriente," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 59 (1945): 59.

should be placed on the center of the altar indicating the true "east," the "orient," the direction towards which the Mass is offered, becoming thus "the common point of focus for both priest and praying community."[82]

As mentioned earlier, the main critique to this practice comes not from the available historical or textual evidence – which, as it was explained, is more significant than normally believed – but from sacramental theology. Farnés is very clear about this priority as he writes – in his critical review of Ratzinger's *The Spirit of the Liturgy* – that sacraments are signs and have a pedagogic end, concluding from that principle that they should be clearly visible to the congregation.[83] This leads to the next step: placing a crucifix on the altar is a "novelty," a consequence of forgetting the significance of the priest. Whereas Ratzinger insisted that the priest cannot be considered more important than the Lord and the Cross should never be perceived as an obstacle, Farnés responds, saying that "Christ is *figured* in the crucifix, but also and above all, *truly present* [realmente presente] in the priest who re-presents him ... The priest is not more important than the Lord, but the *sacrament* of the presence of the Lord (the celebrant) is indeed more important – and certainly more ancient – than the *figure* of the Lord (the crucifix)."[84] Häussling similarly affirms that there is no need to look towards the crucifix because in looking at each other we see the image of God.[85] And Baldovin expanded this view saying that facing a crucifix for the celebration of the Mass is a mistake because, in reality, "one faces Christ in the assembly, one faces Christ in the presider, one faces Christ in the altar, and of course one faces Christ in the consecrated gifts."[86]

Let us now see if the primary sources surveyed can bring some light to the debate. First, to say that the presence of a cross on the altar is a novelty, as did Pedro Farnés, is a conclusion based on the assumption that there is no evidence about its existence in the first millennium. Our study shows that such a statement does not hold true. Second, and more important: what about the objection based on the theological principle of the visibility of the celebrant and his gestures as a requirement for participation at the sacraments? Michael Lang's research has shown that "the visibility of the priest's actions at the altar was hardly of any interest to Christians in

[82] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Spirit of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*, XI:51.
[83] See Farnés, "Una obra importante sobre liturgia," 68–69. [84] Ibid., 72.
[85] See about this Joseph Ratzinger, "The Spirit of the Liturgy," in *Collected Works*," XI: 50–51.
[86] Baldovin, "Idols and Icons," 397.

the first millennium; looking at the celebrant was not considered a requirement for real participation in liturgical prayer."[87] Furthermore, one wonders about the applicability of this principle, especially in big churches: what degree of visibility would be required for really distinguishing the gestures of the celebrant?

To be clear, visibility has a key place in liturgical participation. Yet, an anthropological realism suggests that signs should offer a direct way of knowing, a "simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye," as Josef Pieper said.[88] A sign loses its iconic power when some theory needs to be explained or recalled in order to bring about what should be *simplex intuitus* [a simple look]. In this sense, to say that seeing the celebrant priest or other people present at Mass will be the sign of the Lord's presence for the praying community seems a little naïve. Undoubtedly, there is a presence of Christ in the priest and in the community,[89] but *the* sign of Christ is the Cross, as Augustine said: "What is, as all know, the sign of Christ except the cross of Christ?"[90] That sign on the altar, which can be more easily gazed upon than any gesture and unequivocally conveys the message of Christ's love, reminds believers that his sacrifice is the source of our unity and so brings together the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the liturgy.[91]

The Cross at the center of the altar is perceived as the common point of orientation for the priest and the community, reminding believers that the liturgy is, first and foremost, "the priestly office of Jesus Christ,"[92] whose paschal mystery is renewed, becoming the font of all the sacraments.[93] The Cross, then, recalls the direction and inner dynamic of the Eucharist:

[87] Lang, *Turning towards the Lord*, 106.

[88] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 28.

[89] See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7. Farnés mentioned the "real presence" of Christ in the celebrant priest. In Catholic theology the words "real presence" are normally used to describe the unique presence of Christ in the Eucharist. "This presence is called 'real' not to exclude the idea that the others are 'real' too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man." Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 39.

[90] Augustine, "Tract 118," 5, in *Tractates on the Gospel of John 112–24*, in *Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, ed. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 43.

[91] This is, for Baldovin, another reason to disagree with Ratzinger's proposal about the altar Cross: thinking that we need a Cross on the altar means for him missing the point of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the liturgy. See Baldovin, "Idols and Icons," 396. The vertical and horizontal woods of the Cross appear rather as a powerful sign of that reality.

[92] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7. [93] See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 66.

towards the encounter of Christ, who comes to us to redeem us and feed us. Consequently, the Cross appears as a reminder of the eschatological nature of the Eucharist, and of the cosmic dimension of the liturgy. Certainly, few people nowadays are aware of the importance of the cosmic orientation of the Mass, and, as Lara indicated, sensibilities with respect to liturgical space are not the same as they were centuries ago.[94] However, in a time when the concern for the environment occupies such a central place in the common awareness of normal people and of societies, would not this be an opportunity for deepening what could be an effective way for promoting liturgical participation, remembering that the Risen Lord comes to illumine our lives like the sun?

The altar Cross, then, expresses a Eucharistic theology of the Cross and a cruciform theology of the Eucharist: the Cross, which is in itself a cultic event, becomes the basis of Eucharistic theology.[95] The physical depiction of the crucified Christ on the altar appears as a visible concretization of the themes that marked the patristic and liturgical understanding and practice of the Church shown in this investigation: therefore, the altar Cross reminds us that the Cross is the origin of the Eucharist, born of the open side of the Lord on the Cross, which became the new tree of life from which we receive the food of life, which is the true flesh and blood of the Victim offered on the altar. The sacrifice of Christ is thus received as nourishment for eternal life. In this light, a Cross on the altar also shows the continuity between the Last Supper and the Cross: the visible and ineffable mystery that constantly actualizes and renews the one and definitive sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, the altar Cross visibly communicates that the Eucharist is the sacrifice that gives life to the Church, the renewal of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, and thus brings together the nourishing and sacrificial aspects of the Mass.

Because of this deep visual significance, the altar Cross also helps the faithful to look always upon Christ and offer the sacrifice of praise to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The dualism between sacrifice and meal disappears: believers are fed from the sacrifice of the Cross. The Mass is not seen as a celebration performed as a closed circle in which the gaze of the participants is directed just upon each other or as a rigid and empty ceremonial. The Mass is the sacrifice of the Cross giving life and food, and thus builds community. This is the true orientation of the Eucharistic

[94] See Jaime Lara, "*Versus Populum* Revisited," *Worship* 68 (1994): 220.

[95] See Ratzinger, "The Feast of Faith," in *Collected Works*, XI:322; and "Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion," in *Collected Works*, XI:333–336.

action: towards Christ, who will come in glory and is truly present in the sacrament, and through Him, to the Father in the Spirit. It is for this reason that the Cross has a central place on the altar – as stated by the Second Vatican Council – as one of those "visible signs used by the liturgy to signify invisible divine things ... chosen by Christ or the Church"[96] which help our human nature to be raised to a better comprehension of and more fruitful participation in the Eucharist.

[96] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 33.

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